

REACTIONS TO SPOUSE IMPRISONMENT:  
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCE  
OF SPOUSE IMPRISONMENT AND FACTORS WHICH AFFECT THE WAY IN  
WHICH THE EVENT IS RESPONDED TO

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DEDICATION

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED WITH LOVE:

TO MY MOTHER AND TO THE MEMORY OF MY FATHER

TO MY CHILDREN

AND TO THOSE LARGELY UNACKNOWLEDGED VICTIMS OF CRIME:  
THE FAMILIES OF IMPRISONED MEN AND WOMEN



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ALEX ROBERTSON got me into it, got me through it and got me to finish it.

ALISON, my wife, put up with me when I was at my most preoccupied and irritable. Never once did she fail to make things better.

NICKY and GILLIAN made me put things in their proper perspective. Reading about Postman Pat is more fun than reading about anxiety.

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## ABSTRACT

The literature was reviewed in the areas of : stress and anxiety; crisis theory; decision making and behaviour change; coping and control; and previous studies of spouse imprisonment.

The purpose of this study was to examine spouse imprisonment as experienced by a sample of women whose partners were serving sentences in Scottish prisons. It was also intended to identify factors which might be implicated in how the individual perceives and responds to the event of spouse imprisonment.

The nature of this study was exploratory, and a number of research questions were posed. These were: whether the nature of problems faced by the partners of imprisoned spouses had changed since the last major British study in the area; what factors influenced the way in which the woman responded to the problems; what was the nature of the relationship between anxiety and how the women dealt with problems; and what was the relationship between length and stage of the spouse's sentence and the the women's perceptions of their problems.

123 female partners of imprisoned men were interviewed using a semi - structured interview technique. Ten percent of the

respondents were interviewed a further three times over the subsequent twelve months.

It was concluded that the respondents in this study suffered from a variety of problems in the areas of finance, children, relationships with the wider community, relationships with the male partner, and dealing with the prison and other authority. The frequency and nature of these problems were little different from those reported in much earlier studies.

Five factors were identified which accounted for much of the variance in the perception of problems and reactions to them. The factors were: General Anxiety, Perceived control, Locus of coping strategies, Spouse history, and Attitude to communication with the spouse. General anxiety was found to have an influence on a wide range of problem areas, and reactions to problems. Perceived control had a wide ranging effect also. The influence of each of the other factors seemed to be confined much more to single problem areas.

There was an interaction between length and stage of the spouse's sentence which had an effect on the respondents' perception of and reaction to the event. The interaction between length and stage of sentence also had an effect upon respondents scores on the five factor scales.

The findings are discussed in the light of previous research and the implications of the findings are discussed with reference to policy and individual interventions with female partners of imprisoned men.

PART I

STRESS, ANXIETY AND CONTROL

## CHAPTER ONE

### SETTING THE SCENE: THE CONCEPTS OF STRESS AND ANXIETY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

As pointed out in the abstract, it is intended in this thesis to examine the imprisonment of the male partner in a marital relationship as an example of a stressful event being experienced by one individual; the female partner. Further, it is intended to examine some of the concomitant factors which might influence how different individuals perceive and respond to this particular negative life event.

A number of assumptions are implicit or explicit in the above statement:

- i) that spouse imprisonment is a negative experience
- ii) That negative stimuli engender stress.
- iii) that individuals will attempt to behave in a certain way which will neutralise or change negative stimuli
- iv) That different individuals perceive the same objective event in different ways.



v) That there is a relationship between factors apparently unrelated to an objective event and an individual's response to that objective event.

These assumptions will be addressed during the course of this thesis. In this, the first chapter, however, it is intended to address the concepts of 'stress' and 'coping', as a basis for a discussion on coping with a stressful event.

## 1.2 STRESS; ITS DEFINITION AND NATURE

Stress, it is generally observed, is a phenomenon endemic to modern life. It has been the subject of myriad questionnaires in popular magazines, It has provided subject matter and an income for authors, playwrights and journalists. It has been commended for its ability to facilitate high achievement, and has been blamed for causing low achievement. It has also at various times been blamed, with varying degrees of evidence for almost every non - infectious ailment known. In spite of this however, and of the fact that the scientific literature on the subject is large, it would appear that a totally satisfactory comprehensive definition of the concept has still to be arrived at. Indeed, it may be that one of the major problems of arriving at a definition of stress as a scientific concept would <sup>be</sup> ~~is~~ that its use in modern language, and its perceived omnipresence in modern living, means that in a general context, everybody 'knows' what it is. Thus one may not be able to define stress but everybody recognises it when they encounter it. Unfortunately or, indeed perhaps, fortunately

this approach is hardly sufficient when a more precise account of the phenomenon is required. Thus the search for an adequate scientific account of stress continues.

To date it would appear that there is little agreement as to a definitive conception of stress. However, it can be seen that such attempts to provide a comprehensive definition fall into two, or more recently, three classifications:

- i) Definitions based on the stressor
- ii) Definitions based on the response
- iii) Interactive/transactional approaches.

A further dichotomy may perhaps be identified between those definitions arising from empirical and clinical work on physiological, mainly autonomic responses to stressful stimuli, and those definitions arising from empirical and clinical work on cognitive and behavioural responses.

### 1.3 DEFINITIONS BASED ON THE STRESSOR

These definitions based upon what Cox (1978) called the stimuli and what Fisher (1987) later termed the independent variable, perceive stress as being a condition of the environment. Cox compares such a model to an engineering model where external stresses give rise to a reaction within the individual. Up to a

point stimuli can be tolerated, but beyond some certain limit damage will occur. Fisher points out that within this model the only problem is to determine what constitutes a stressful stimulus as opposed to a non - stressful stimulus. Weitz (1970) reviewing the literature to that date found eight, including too fast information processing, noxious stimuli, perceived threat, isolation, and group pressure. Lazarus (1976) saw perceived threat as being central, and importantly for future research, Frankenhauser (1975) found lack of control to be an important stressor.

The major model of stress as a stimulus, is that which views the stressor as being a demand made on the individual. The greater the demand, the greater the degree of stress. However, Fisher (1986) asserts that such a formulation takes no account of ways in which absence of demand can be stressful. She points out that greater generalisability can be applied if it <sup>is</sup> assumed that extremes rather than excessive stimulation are stressful.

An example of such a model was formulated by Welford (1973), who viewed the relationship between demand and performance in terms of an inverted 'U' shaped curve. The implication of this is that the individual performs at an optimal level under moderate degrees of demand, but that performance deteriorates as a result of both increased demand (supraoptimal) and decreased demand (suboptimal).

Another potential problem for this type of model however, is its lack of discrimination in terms of individual differences. In the basic model, the assumption seems to be that what is stressful for one individual will be stressful for another. As Cox states,

"Statements about stressful environments made in this context have by necessity to rely on normative data. Possibly the most important question to ask of experiments on stress which treat it as the independent variable is, 'does stress exist in the eye of the subject or in the eye of ~~the eye of~~ the experimenter?'"

#### 1.4 DEFINITIONS BASED UPON RESPONSES TO THE STRESSOR

A major asset of those models of stress which take as their starting point the subjects' response to a stress producing situation is that stress can be seen to be almost self defining....'Stress is that which is responded to by a behavioural or other response indicative of the person being under stress.' This view of stress owes much to Selye's (1956) General Adaptation Model which viewed stress responses as being dependent on neither the nature of the stressor, nor the individual experiencing it.

##### 1.4.1. Selye's General Adaptation Model

Selye viewed the response to stress as being a universal defence reaction, which had three stages;

In the first phase, 'the alarm reaction', The organism shows the physiological changes characteristic of exposure to the stressor, and its level of resistance may be reduced. In the second stage, the organism develops resistance to the stressor. The changes characteristic of the first alarm stage disappear and are replaced by changes consistent with the organism's resistance to the stressor. The final stage is that of exhaustion. After long term exposure to the stressor the potential for maintaining adaptive changes breaks down and final collapse occurs.

Selye proposed that the adaptive changes which occur as a response to stress are manifest externally as disease states, and that illness occurs when the adaptive changes exceed the resources of the organism.

A major problem for definitions of stress based upon the response to stress is the difficulty in establishing what is a response to a particular experience, and thus what is a stress response. Obviously then, if there is difficulty in defining a stress response and the definition of stress stands or falls on the definition of the response, then there is a major problem for this approach. It would seem that in the domain of human behaviour, this problem is particularly pertinent.

Whether or not Selye's model with its major focus on non-specificity and a universal adaptation reaction can account for all physiological stress responses, (and Cox cites evidence which

would challenge Selye's position), It has been argued that at least in its earlier formulation, Selye's model did not take account of the role of psychological processes. The indisputable fact of individual differences in perception, for example, would seem to have little place in Selye's early model and those deriving from it. Indeed, there would seem to be any number of permutations of relationships between individual psychology and the environment 'out there' which a model such as Selye's original formulation would have difficulty accounting for. It is not uncommon, for instance for a stress response to occur which is dissociated in time from the stressor. An example~~s~~ might be where the individual anticipates a stressful event. In this case, the stress response, or at least one very similar, may occur in advance of the threatened event. Similarly, the event may be replayed in memory and the response occurs~~s~~ long after the cessation of the stressful event. It may very well be that these psychological processes produce what Selye would have defined as stress responses, i.e increased levels of arousal and hormone production, but there is a question as to whether these responses are stress responses or are they in fact stressors themselves?

McGrath (1970,1974) and others have argued that they are both, and this introduces a third way in which stress has been defined; as an interaction between the stressor and the individual experiencing it.

### 1.5 INTERACTIONAL AND TRANSACTIONAL DEFINITIONS OF STRESS

Definitions based upon a hypothesised interaction between the individual and the environment, when viewed collectively, seem to attempt in a number of ways to overcome the problems of the two other approaches described above. These models stress the view of the individual as an active organism and not merely the passive recipient of stressors. In addition, by their nature they take account of the role of individual differences in that they view stress as arising through the existence of a particular relationship between an individual and the environment. Where they perhaps differ from one another is in defining the substance and nature of this relationship.

A number of models, while proposing an interaction between the individual's particular characteristics and the environment, and the role of intervening processes, make no attempt to define the nature of these processes. Such an interactional model was proposed by Kagan and Levi (1971) in which it was postulated that external stimuli (which Kagan and Levi termed 'Psychosocial Stimuli'), interact with genetic factors and the individual's previous experience to determine the particular stress response.

This model to some extent provides one version of the missing pieces in Seley's original general adaptation model. The inclusion of genetic, experiential and other factors as intervening variables may provide an account for why some situations may have differential rates of stressfulness between individuals and within the same individual at different times.

The inclusion of a feedback loop in this model, may provide one account for a response being simultaneously a stress response and a stressor. Indeed Selye in his later work accommodated the idea of individual differences while retaining the idea of non-specific effects of stressors. Selye (1975) recognised that qualitatively different stressors of the same potency did not elicit exactly the same syndrome and that the same degree of stress induced by the same stressor might have different pathological effects between individuals. His approach to explaining these anomalies was to hypothesise the existence of both specific effects and non-specific effects. Thus, while heat and cold produce as non-specific effects sweating and shivering respectively, they both produce as a specific effect an increase in adrenocortical activity. Further to this, it is hypothesised that in some cases the non-specific effects modify the specific effects. Similarly with the differential pathogenic effects of the stress response, Selye postulated the existence of 'Conditioning Factors' both Endogenous (eg genetic predisposition, age, sex etc), and exogenous (e.g learning).

A different approach has been taken by the introduction of the concept of demand, pioneered in this context by Lazarus (1966, 1976). Lazarus paid particular attention to the individual's perception of his or her situation. He identified three processes involved in a potentially stressful situation;



- i) Primary Appraisals are concerned with interpreting and coding the problem.
- ii) Secondary Appraisals are concerned with the possible responses to the perceived demand
- iii) Tertiary Appraisals are concerned with the assessment of possible consequences of a response.

Lazarus defined stress as occurring when 'there are demands on the individual which tax or exceed his adjustive resources.'

This 'Demand - Capacity' approach was further developed by McGrath (1974,1976) who proposed four classes of event; The first class is the 'demand' imposed by the environment. The second class is 'reception', that is recognition or appraisal by the 'focal organism', and creates 'subjective demand'. The third class is the response, and the fourth class is the consequence. Within this theory, stress may be expressed in the form of an algorithm:

$$S = Co\{(D - C)\}$$

Where D = Demand; C = Capacity; Co = Importance of Coping

Thus stress is seen in this formula as a function of the degree to which demand exceeds perceived capacity and the importance of coping.

Several aspects of McGrath's formulation are notable. The 'focal organism' can be at a number of system levels: individuals,

groups or organisations. Secondly ~~that~~, unlike earlier models, McGrath's postulates a reason why an event might be stressful, (i.e that an individual will perceive a demand as causing stress if he or she does not perceive themselves to have the capacity to meet that demand). Further to this, ~~that~~ in McGrath's Formulation, together with the work of Lazarus it is implicit that crucial among the factors which interact with what might be called the objective event to determine the degree of stress experienced, are the processes involved in the focal organism's appraisal of the situation. Implicitly, McGrath also included the salience of the stressful situation as a factor in determining the impact on the individual, (as did Lazarus in his account of the processes involved in a potentially stressful situation).

The models described in this section have a number of commonalities. Firstly they draw from both stimulus based and response based definitions of stress, laying emphasis on the interaction between both. They also emphasise that stress can be seen as an individual perceptual phenomenon and that psychological processes are of major importance in understanding stress in human beings. Thus, to a large extent they do not accept that stress responses are non - specific.

Models of stress in humans, then, have evolved from simple mechanistic linear models based on an engineering analogue or a simple 'black box' model based upon observation of the response,

to linear interactional models which stress the importance of individual differences, and provide postulated reasons for an event to be construed as stressful.

A further class of model has been formulated which postulate, 'a greater contribution being made by psychological processes than is envisaged by purely interactional models', (Fisher 1986). These models have been termed 'transactional' in that they emphasise that the individual takes an active role in his or her interaction with the environment, and that the consequences of the action are important determinants of whether stress will be exacerbated or palliated.

Later work by McGrath (1976), based upon empirical work carried out by Lowe and McGrath (1971), argued that that the closer perceived demand is to perceived capacity when there is a perceived deficit of the latter, then the greater will be the degree of stress encountered (McGrath 1976). Thus this model introduces also the importance of uncertainty into the equation. If the focal organism is unsure whether it has the capacity to meet the demands placed on it by the environment, then given the same level of importance of coping, more stress will be engendered than if the organism is certain that it does not have the required capacity. Cox, however, disputes one corollary of ~~McGrath's~~ <sup>McGrath's</sup> ~~migrates~~ new formulation. He argues that 'while there is much sense in McGrath's argument that small imbalances between perceived demand and capacity may be more stressful than larger

imbalances ..... It is difficult to maintain that overwhelming (disastrous) situations are less stressful than more moderate ones.' Instead, Cox suggests a 'U' shaped relationship where very small and very large imbalances will be stressful.

Cox himself sees stress as 'a complex and dynamic system of transaction between the person and his environment', and '....an individual perceptual phenomenon rooted in psychological processes'. The model which has been formulated by Cox and Mackay (1976), identifies five stages in the system.

i) ACTUAL DEMAND, which is determined by the external environment and also by internal needs and drives

ii) PERCEPTION OF DEMAND AND COPING ABILITY. Stress occurs when there is an imbalance between these perceptions.

iii) RESPONSE TO STRESS, which are psychophysiological changes which occur as a method of coping

iv) CONSEQUENCES, both actual and perceived of adopting or deciding to adopt a particular response.

v) FEEDBACK which occurs at all stages of the system and is important in shaping the outcome at each stage, and indeed, <sup>in</sup> ~~of~~ allowing a stress response to become in turn a source of further stress..

What seems to be of overriding importance for Cox and McKay, is the individual's cognitive appraisal of the situation, and of his ability to cope. Their model leaves open the nature of the intervening variables which might influence such a cognitive appraisal, thus allowing the possibility of different levels of importance of endogenous and exogenous variables between situations and individuals. From the model then, Cox (1978) provides the following definition of stress;

'Stress can only be sensibly defined as a perceptual phenomenon arising from a comparison between the demand on the person and his ability to cope. An imbalance in this mechanism, when coping is important, gives rise to the experience of stress, and to stress response. The latter represents attempts at coping with the source of stress. Coping is both psychological and physiological. If normal coping is ineffective, stress is prolonged, and abnormal responses may occur.' (Cox 1979, p34)

It was suggested at the beginning of this chapter that a dichotomy may exist between definitions of stress based on physiological, mainly autonomic responses and definitions based upon cognitive and behavioural responses. It would seem to be clear that interactional and transactional models of stress arise very much from the latter. It might be argued, (as does Cox), that neither approach offers much more than the others in the way of definition of stress. It could also be argued, however, that even among those who espouse stress theories based upon empirical physiology, few would dispute the proposition that when accounting for human behavioural responses to stress, individual perceptual factors play an important part. In addition, it may be argued that since many physiological responses are manifest in

or engender behavioural responses, and vice versa, then an interactional approach may account for more of the available data on stress than ~~does~~ either of the other approaches. Thus it may be that an interactional or transactional approach is the best conceptualisation to date of stress in human subjects. For this reason, and because this study is examining cognitive and behavioural responses to spouse imprisonment, it would seem appropriate for the purposes of this thesis to accept Cox's definition of stress as one which has utility for conceptualising stress.

#### 1.6 ANXIETY

there is a large body of literature which deals with the role of stress in the origins and maintenance of anxiety, and on the role of anxiety in interfering with task performance, (e.g Eysenck M 1983). This literature will be discussed in more detail later in this section, but in summary it would appear that stress theory would predict that levels of anxiety do not necessarily reduce in response to inter alia the chronological distance from the stress precipitating event, and that those people who are more stress prone are more likely to suffer from severe anxiety in the face of stressors than are those who are less prone to experiencing stress as crisis. Further to this, it may be that those individuals who are prone to more severe anxiety will be less likely to apply successful coping strategies than those who are less anxious. Before discussing the above in detail, it is important to consider what anxiety is, and what

part it does in fact play in the perception of and ability to adapt to a stress precipitating event..

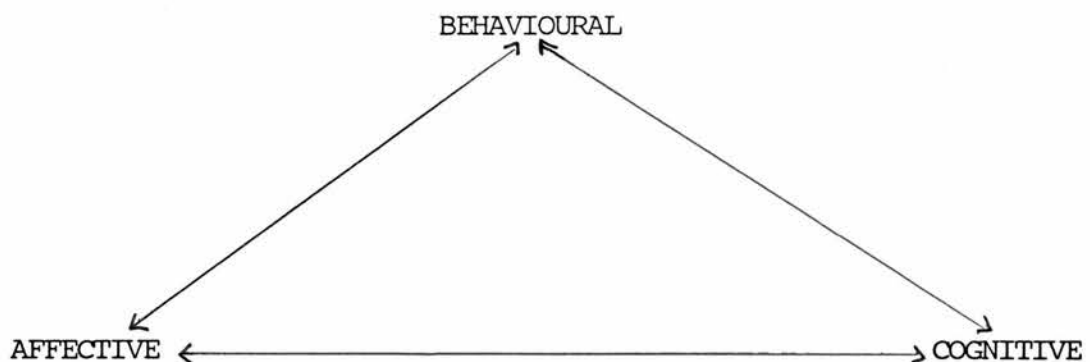
#### 1.6.1 Defining Anxiety

It has been suggested that the problem of defining anxiety may be analogous to the proverbial situation of wise but blind men who differed dramatically in their conceptions of an elephant because each had touched only certain parts of its exterior anatomy. Indeed it may be argued that the current case is doubly complicated by the fact that unlike the elephant handlers, those working in the field of anxiety research very often do not speak the same conceptual language, using different terminologies and concepts in espousing their view of the elephant.

There does appear to be some measure of agreement in the literature, (e.g Spielberger 1972, , Beck & Emery 1985), that anxiety is an emotional and physiological state which is characterised by a host of usually unpleasant symptoms such as tension, inability to relax, dry mouth, dizziness, irritability and negative affective state. Spielberger also notes that 'there is a consensus that anxiety reactions are often evoked by some form of stress or threat, but that there is less agreement as to the nature of the mechanism that mediates between an anxiety reaction and the threat stimuli which evoke it'. For a number of commentators the reactive nature of anxiety symptoms would seem to be paramount. Beck, for instance, points out that it is important that anxiety is not regarded as the cause of

psychological disturbance in the same way that pain is not seen as being the cause of, for example, appendicitis. Anxiety reduction may make the individual better able to cope with a situation, but Beck's admonition is that, 'We should not allow nature's mechanism for dramatising the feelings of anxiety to mislead us into believing that this most salient subjective experience plays the central role in the so called anxiety disorders.'

Anxiety is best understood if viewed as a process rather than a state or personality trait. Spielberger (1972) sees such a process as, 'referring to the sequence of cognitive, affective and behavioural responses which occur as a reaction to some form of stress'. The three interactive dimensions of 'anxiety as process' can be shown thus:



When is anxiety regarded as normal and when pathological? Beck seems to express the consensus when he proposes that 'anxiety is generally regarded as normal if it is aroused by a realistic danger and if it dissipates when the danger is no longer present.



If the degree of anxiety is disproportionate to the risk and the severity of possible danger, and if it continues even though no objective danger exists, then the reaction is considered abnormal'. Thus, anxiety might be seen to be characterised by one or more of the dimensions outlined by Spielberger and displayed above, being overactive relative to an objective appraisal of the danger.

Before expanding on the three dimensions of anxiety, it is perhaps appropriate to differentiate and clarify some of the terms which are often associated with anxiety. Fear is an anticipation of danger. Beck 1972 sums up fear as being 'the primary appraisal of danger. This primary appraisal of danger triggers anxiety. A second concept which often attaches to discussions of anxiety is arousal. That is a heightened awareness of danger. It is interesting to note that most laboratory studies of anxiety operationalise the concept in terms of increased levels of arousal. Epstein however, in 1971 detached arousal from anxiety per se, defining the former as a state of vigilance which allows the individual to attend more closely to situational changes. Epstein maintained that rather than arousal being a consequence of anxiety, arousal may in fact be a trigger for other anxiety symptoms. That is, if arousal is maintained for long periods then other symptoms of anxiety arise from this. This would seem to be consistent with interactional and transactional models of stress, and also, with the

definition of anxiety implicit in the literature on crises discussed in the next chapter.

..

Speilberger, however, maintained that a difference between anxiety and stress was that the latter described different situations which an observer would objectively regard as involving greater or lesser degrees of danger. Anxiety however, was stated to involve the actor's own subjective perception of threat inherent in a situation. This definition would obviously go counter to interactional and transactional definitions of stress, which maintain the phenomenological nature of the experience as a central plank of the model. However, Spielberger is not alone in proposing such a dichotomy. Some 'crisis theorists' would maintain that the distinction between stressful situations and crisis situations is that crisis is an objectively stressful event which is perceived as crisis precipitating. In fact it is probably the case that since the models of stress discussed earlier incorporate an account of the stress response, it is merely Spielbergers' point of entry in defining stress that is an issue rather than something more fundamental.

#### 1.6.2 Cognitive Processes Involved In Anxiety

A number of models of behaviour espouse variations on the theme of 'Man The Scientist' (eg Kelly 1965), That is to say the human being is an 'evaluating organism', making sense of its environment on the basis of previous experience, searching the

environment for cues about what is needed or desired and evaluating each input as to its relevance and significance.

So too in theories of anxiety. Numerous commentators have emphasised the centrality of cognitive factors in anxiety. The cognitive / subjective dimension of anxiety refers to the appraisal of threat in a given situation. Lazarus (1972), as discussed earlier, identified three appraisal processes:- Primary appraisal, which involves the judgement as to whether a given input is relevant, meaningful, beneficial or harmful etc. Secondary appraisal involving a judgement as to whether the individual can adequately cope with the situation using existing strategies, and a third process which Lazarus called 'reappraisal', in which the individual learns from the secondary appraisal and uses the information obtained to reappraise the situation.

Agreement seems to exist then that 'A situation is threatening only to the extent that it is perceived as such' (Spielberger), and thus if a situation was one an individual was

- a) unfamiliar with
  - b) and/or did not understand
  - c) and/or recognised as threatening from previous experience
- then anxiety would occur.

Mandler 1972 understood anxiety to be synonymous with helplessness, and indeed the three scenarios described above could

obviously engender feelings of helplessness. This phenomenon will be discussed in much more detail later in this chapter, but suffice to state at this time that perceived helplessness is an often observed factor in anxiety and is one which has obvious implications for an examination of spouse imprisonment as a crisis.

#### 1.5.3 Behavioural / Somatic Processes Involved In Anxiety

The postulated behavioural and somatic dimensions of anxiety can be seen to correspond to the cognitive dimensions. Beck (1985) recognises two systems which may go into effect dependent on appraisal of the situation and which, he postulates, will determine behaviour and outcome. The first of these systems is the 'Inhibitory system' designed for instant reaction, and the second is the 'Anxiety reduction' system designed for slower reaction, which is capable of more complete information processing and selection of strategies. In evolutionary terms the function of anxiety is a warning and defence against life threatening situations. To explain these behaviours in relation to modern societal situations, Gray's (1981) work will be discussed in order to consider both his psychological theory of behaviour and his proposed neuronal pathways representing the inhibitory system Beck was to discuss in 1985.

Gray based his research on the marked similarity between the behavioural effects of some anxiolytics and the effects of damage to the septal - hippocampal system. In brief, Gray's evidence

suggested that the major function of the septal-hippocampal system is to compare actual with expected stimuli. Gray postulates that if a situation arises which leads to expectations not being fulfilled, then a 'mismatch' is created in the SHS so putting it into a 'control' mode. The behavioural manifestations of this control state are those symptoms recognised as being characteristic of anxiety. Anxiety symptoms will subside when either habituation to stimuli or changes in behaviour or resolution of the situation occurs.

Beck 1985 proposes a second system (which he does not identify in neurological terms), in which behaviour output is essentially under voluntary control, hence it does not depend on the production of anxiety symptoms to be put into motion. It is however usually triggered at the same time as the Behavioural Inhibition System as it takes longer to become effective. Beck postulates that this system provides a much broader repertoire of behaviours and strategies which can be used in different situations, including those situations which would usually elicit an anxiety response.

The research on stress discussed earlier and on crises which will be discussed in the next chapter, describes behavioural responses which are remarkably similar to those contingent on anxiety provoking situations. Indeed it would seem even at an intuitive level that a situation which is perceived as a crisis is likely to produce anxiety in the perceiver. The relationship between

performance and anxiety, and that between performance and time in anxious subjects, takes the form of a more or less steep inverted 'U' with a sharp decrease in performance followed by a gradual increase in the use of effective strategies. Thus in Beck's terms the individual upon encountering a potentially stress producing situation may initially react using an inhibitory system, and only gradually utilise the anxiety reduction system whereby a much broader repertoire of behaviours and strategies is applied to the situation.

It would certainly seem to be the case that there is a decrease in the quantity and the quality of performance in the initial stages of coping under stress. In much the same terms as Beck, Easterbrook (1959), postulated that anxiety was accompanied initially by attentional selectivity, which was initially useful in that it limited input to what was essential for immediate response, but which is counterproductive later, in that relevant signals are missed. Further to this, Michael Eysenck, (1983), found that feedback which indicated failure further impaired performance to a much greater extent in anxious subjects than in non-anxious subjects.

#### 1.7 SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY AND SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

There would seem to be one particular logical inconsistency inherent in the reported responses to stress. That is that in addition to anxiety which might be characterised by an increase in arousal and autonomic activity, it is frequently reported that

stress responses are often characterised by behavioural and psychobiological phenomena which could be described as being analogous to the characteristic symptoms of depression. Indeed it has been reported that anxiety and depressive symptoms often occur simultaneously, and/or sequentially, (Dobson 1985).

One explanation for this phenomenon is that the nature of the provoking agent has a bearing on the nature of the response pattern. Garber et al (1980), postulated that depressive symptoms would arise from outcomes which were uncontrollable but highly likely, and anxiety symptoms would occur as a result of uncontrollable and uncertain outcomes. This is very similar to Finlay-Jones and Brown's 1981 study in which depressive symptoms were associated with events which entailed loss, and anxiety symptoms were associated with events which entailed 'threat'. Further to this, Garber et al (1980) postulated that anxious and depressive symptoms may occur together because in real life many uncontrollable events involve both loss and threat, whether the latter be threat of loss or some other kind of threat.

This latter finding is of particular interest in the context of the present study. As will be discussed in Chapter Five, the experience of spouse imprisonment as an uncontrollable event, entails not only the loss of the spouse, but also at various stages, a threat of loss of the spouse, and also threatened and actual loss in a number of other domains including material aspects, social aspects, and role aspects.

### 1.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EXPERIENCE OF SPOUSE IMPRISONMENT

An attempt to transpose the foregoing discussion into the situation faced by the prisoner's wife would seem to raise a number of issues. The experience of spouse imprisonment is likely to comprise a number of situations, each of which places demands upon the individual woman. The way in which these demands are perceived and responded to will be influenced by a large number of factors, perhaps the most important including the following:

- i) the salience of the situation for the woman
- ii) the woman's actual capability
- iii) her own perception of her capability
- iv) whether the woman has been in a similar situation before, and whether she satisfactorily coped with the situation before.
- v) How anxious the woman becomes as a result of the situations arising from the husband's imprisonment.
- vi) other psychobiological factors within the woman.

There will generally be an initial period when the woman's response to the situations caused by the husband's imprisonment will be disorganised and non productive this may often, (but not always) be followed by a period when the woman has adapted her responses to the situations, and they become more effective.



The more anxiety which is generated by experiencing the problems caused by spouse imprisonment, the less likely the woman is to cope effectively.

This lack of coping may act as a source of further stress, making it less likely that the woman will cope effectively in future.

Anxiety symptoms may be accompanied by symptoms of depression, and both these types of symptom may be alleviated by

- i) successful coping
- ii) habituation
- iii) a change of behaviour on the part of the woman

In the next chapter, it is intended to discuss the literature on crisis theory, which, in essence, leads to very similar conclusions to the foregoing discussion.

## CHAPTER TWO

### STRESS WITHIN THE FAMILY: CRISIS THEORY

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the concepts of stress and anxiety were discussed in a general sense. An earlier approach to the study of stresses and strains within the family as a particular small group evolved in order to explain the observed responses of family members to catastrophic situations, such as sudden bereavement, armed conflict etc. This crisis theory was formulated as a basis for interventions which were designed to ameliorate the effects of such stressful events.

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#### 2.2 CRISIS THEORY

The development of crisis theory, and the paradigm of crisis intervention, owes much to the work of three individuals. Erik Erikson, Erich Lindemann, and Gerald Caplan, working separately, evolved the three cornerstones of the theory.

- 1) The concept of developmental crises
- 2) A redefinition of transient personality disorders as life crises, having predictable patterns
- 3) The idea of applying a public health model to mental illness.

For the crisis theorist, the concept of crisis in its simplest form is defined by Caplan. His definition of crisis as 'an upset in a steady state' (Caplan 1960), rests, as Rapoport points out, 'on the postulate that an individual strives to maintain a state of equilibrium through a constant series of adaptive manoeuvres and characteristic problem solving activities, through which basic need fulfilment takes place (Rapoport 1965). Other definitions make more explicit the importance of the nature of the event provoking the use of novel behaviours. For instance, Koos defines crisis as situations which 'block the usual patterns of action and call for new ones' (Koos 1946), and Hill states that crisis is 'any sharp or decisive change for which old patterns are inadequate' (Hill 1949). Perhaps a more complete definition, however, is that provided by Cumming and Cumming, who state that crisis is 'the impact of any event which challenges the individuals assumptive state, and forces the individual to change his view of, or readapt to the world, himself, or both, (Cumming and Cumming 1962). Erikson in his pioneering work contributed the idea that in normal growth, the individual experiences several specific developmental crises that must be surmounted if the individual is to become a mature integrated adult. He defined crisis as a 'necessary turning point, a crucial moment when development must move one way or the other, marshalling resources of growth, recovery and further differentiation', (Erikson 1968).

In contrast to Erikson's preoccupation with developmental crises (Which are normative, ie will inevitably be encountered by every person), Lindemann was concerned with those crises which were unusual and caused by some event outside of the individual and which caused some transient psychological disorder. His particular interest, following his classic study of the reactions of the relatives of the 1944 Coconut Grove fire disaster victims in Boston, was in acute grief reactions following bereavement. Close observation of the bereaved highlighted remarkable similarities in reaction to the event. This led Lindemann to conclude that an individual has to accommodate such a crisis in a very specific manner and that those who did not conform were less likely to adapt to the loss. Lindemann's investigations contributed to crisis theory the idea that reactions to crisis follow a predictable pattern and have specific stages (Lindemann 1944). There have been a number of commentators expressing reservations about Lindemann's methodology, e.g Parkes (1972), but it is still seen as an important and oft - quoted study.

The third influence on the development of crisis theory was Gerald Caplan, a forceful exponent of crisis intervention theory. A major thrust of his approach to the theory was concerned with primary, secondary and tertiary intervention, and ways of applying these public health concepts to mental health.

Before considering crisis theory in detail, it may be instructive to provide a summary of the main points. There are a number of assumptions underlying crisis theory:

- 1) A crisis is not necessarily a pathological experience. Acute symptoms manifested in crises do not necessarily indicate previous personality disturbance or reflect current pathology. Instead they mirror first a lack of available mechanisms for dealing with the present situation, then tentative behaviours that seek to resolve the situation effectively and eventually the behaviours adopted for coping with the crisis.
- 2) Crises are temporary and therefore self-limiting. All crises must come to an end and none continues indefinitely. Some adjustment is made to the event, be it adequate or inadequate. It is assumed that different types of crisis have different temporal histories. For example crisis precipitated by bereavement will differ in terms length of from that caused by the imprisonment of a spouse.
- 3) Each type of crisis pursues a course made up of typical identifiable stages. Crisis behaviours and reaction patterns can be anticipated. Further, each crisis category has an individualised progression that is theoretically discrete from any other.
- 4) Coping with a current crisis permits the individual to cope more efficiently with further crises.

### 2.3 STAGES OF CRISIS

As the course of reaction to crisis is constant and predictable, it is postulated that the stages of a crisis can be outlined. A number of stages are apparent:

- 1) An objective event takes place. Events as diverse as earthquakes, and the birth of a premature baby, have been construed by researchers in terms of crisis theory.
- 2) The event interacts with the individual's or family's crisis meeting resources which may be excellent, adequate, poor, or non-existent.
- 3) From this interaction, a definition is made of the event. The same event may be defined similarly or quite differently by different individuals or families.
- 4) If this definition of the event leads to a perception of crisis, then a period of disorganisation inevitably follows. This is characterised by various maladaptive behaviours, or psychiatric syndromes. These may include, for example, grief, withdrawal, inactivity, or heightened anxiety. There is exaggerated use of currently available defence systems, and behaviours that are not suited to the present crisis situation.
- 5) This period of disorganisation is followed by a period of reorganisation which again has identifiable phases.

i) The phase of 'correct cognitive perception' where the problem is maintained at a conscious level. An example of this phase in bereavement would involve the individual's realisation that feelings of dependency and support can no longer be anchored to the deceased.

ii) 'Management of affect through awareness of feelings'. In this phase there is an appropriate acceptance and release of feelings associated with the crisis. For example, after the death of a loved one emotions such as guilt remorse hostility etc are accepted and find suitable expression

iii) 'The development of patterns of behaviour for seeking and using help'. The individual begins to adopt constructive means for dealing with the problem, and uses other people and organisations to help in this task.

iv) At the end of that phase, habitual behavioural patterns have evolved and allow flexible use of people and external resources even outside of crisis situations. Thus it may be seen that the experience of a crisis situation has the potential to be a learning experience where the individual develops generalisable skills or strategies which can be applied to other situations or problems.

## 2.4 THE CLASSIFICATION OF STRESSOR EVENTS

A fundamental tenet implicit in crisis theory is that an event , for example the imprisonment of a spouse, has a subjective and an objective component, and that the subjective component is to some extent, potentially more damaging to the individual than is the objective component. Further, it may be seen that there is an interaction between the event, the individual experiencing it and environmental factors which impinge on both. All three of these components being necessary to the total subjective experience of spouse imprisonment. The subjective experience of the event and the concomitant environmental factors, may, when combined with a lack of effective coping strategies within the individual, be sufficient to determine whether the crisis is overcome or not.

Thus it may be that an individual has learned through socialisation the cultural meaning of prison, offending, separation, etc. They have also attained through their experience, a perception of themselves in terms of, for example, their self efficacy. Thus the objective event, (e.g spouse imprisonment), is defined not only in objective terms nor even in terms of cultural meaning, but primarily in terms of the individual's interpretation of both of the above as well as how effective the person feels themselves to be in coping with problems. This definition, then, may be seen to be an active



behaviour which is part of the coping process rather than something which is outwith the individual.

According to the crisis literature the nature of the stressor and its perceived seriousness interact with other factors to influence the ways in which it will be reacted to. In terms of a families reaction to a crisis, perhaps the most important of these other factors is the extent to which the family has formulated a coherent system of shared beliefs about the world and their relationship to it both as individuals and as a family unit. If all members attach the same meaning to an event, a cohesive response is more likely.

#### 2.4.1 How Stressor Events Have Been Classified In The Literature

A number of authors have categorised the different types of stressor event which can be encountered, defined as crisis precipitating and reacted to, and it would appear that such attempts fall into at least two distinct camps. Firstly there were those who classified stressors in terms of whether or not they might be called normative (i.e may be expected to be encountered by every individual and indeed in some cases might be inevitable). Caplan for instance identified two categories:

- 1) Crises precipitated by every day changes in an individual's life, e.g. entry into school, the birth of a sibling, marriage, death of a family member etc
- 2) Crises precipitated by extraordinary or unusually hazardous events, e.g chronic illness, accidents, family dislocations etc.

It might be argued, however, that Caplan's formulation and those like it allow events which even intuitively might be seen to be very different, not only in degree but also in nature to be classified as similar. It is arguable whether the individual defines an event solely in terms of the probability of its occurrence. For example it would seem unlikely at an intuitive level that bereavement, (which Caplan would define as Normative), would be defined by a family as being more similar to a child's entry into school than to acute illness or a serious accident involving a family member, or divorce (all of which Caplan's postulate would define as 'disaster type' precipitants).

It should be noted that Caplan's classification has the implication that in the case of spouse imprisonment the possibility exist that the families of recidivists suffer less than those of first offenders since habituation might make imprisonment normative rather than a 'disaster'.

A similar caveat could be expressed regarding the classification formulated by Cumming and Cumming, although less so since they

include an intervening variable. Their three part classification is as follows:

- 1) Those crises which are biologically tinged, e.g adolescence, menopause, etc
- 2) Those which are environmentally tinged e.g retirement unemployment change of location etc
- 3) Those which are adventitious e.g disasters etc

It may be seen that the classifications outlined so far are equally applicable to the family unit and also the individual. Indeed much of what has been discussed above could easily be incorporated into the more recent stress literature. A second method of classifying crisis precipitants however, places the focus much more specifically on social groups. Reuben Hill (1958) for example delineates two types of crisis, but places more emphasis on the family unit as the focus of crisis. His categories are :

- 1) Crises precipitated by extrafamilial events such as war, flood economic depression etc
- 2) Crises precipitated by intrafamilial events such as desertion, alcohol problems, divorce, imprisonment etc

Hill sees the first category as having the potential to solidify the family because stresses in this category are external to the

family and mobilise its collective problem solving strategies. Perhaps an example of this phenomenon in the realms of spouse imprisonment may be observed in the reaction of the families of political prisoners or those who perceive their incarceration to have a political component.

Crises precipitated by Hill's second group however are seen to be much more disorganising in that they arise from troubles that reflect poorly on the family's internal adequacy. The often documented classical response to intrafamilial offending such as incest would seem to reinforce this proposition.

A further typology, expanded by Hill (1958) concentrates upon the consequences of the crisis precipitating event for the family.

1) Events which produce 'dismemberment'. This occurs when a member of the family leaves, for example, in bereavement or some form of extended separation.

2) Events which produce 'ascension'. This occurs as a result of an unplanned addition to the unit, for example pregnancy or the return of an absent spouse.

3) Events which produce 'demoralisation'. This occurs when the group size remains the same but one member experiences an undesirable event or condition. Examples of this crisis are alcohol problems, illness, unemployment, etc.

4) A final category consists of crisis events which precipitate demoralisation and one of the other two consequences. Imprisonment of a spouse, divorce, unwanted pregnancy, and the return of an absent spouse are all events which might precipitate demoralisation.

Hill's reorganisation of earlier classifications was subsequently taken up by a number of authors. Le Masters for example conducted what was probably the first study of parenthood as a crisis based upon Hill's concept of ascension, and he found that a majority of middle class couples studied experienced the birth of their first child as an 'extensive or severe crisis'. Two notable aspects of these studies were firstly the concentration on 'normative' crisis and secondly the introduction of the concept of 'role shift' as a major factor in the crisis experience.

This introduces a final method of classifying stressor events to be considered here. It is one which attracted much attention as a result of the widening of crisis theory to encompass everyday 'non - pathological' events. The classification to follow were suggested by Burgess in 1955

- 1) Events which precipitate a sudden shift in family status
- 2) Events which cause conflict among family members in the conception of their roles.

This classification would seem to be important for a number of reasons, not least that it highlights the fact that a crisis may be precipitated by an event which objectively might be seen as positive (e.g a spouse being employed for the first time, a move to a higher status job etc), as well as the more familiar downturn in fortunes. In addition the importance of role conflict as crisis is stressed within this classification and, as mentioned earlier, this area has been increasingly adopted for study over the last fifteen years, (see for example Rapaport 1971, Rapaport, Rapoport and Rosow 1976)

It has been argued however, that attempts to classify stressor events in such a manner for the purpose of predicting the course of the resulting crisis, is fraught with problems. For instance any classification of events which uses the intra/extra familial dichotomy immediately encounters the fact that most intra familial stressors are simultaneously stressful events, and in all likelihood responses to stress. Divorce or marital separation is an obvious example of this phenomenon, but investigations have for instance produced convincing evidence for the possibility of the conception and bearing of children being used as a strategy by couples to cope with pre-existing stress.

Much the same can be shown in the case of classifications in terms of normative versus non - normative events. A response to a normative event (e.g. menopause) can be to become involved

in a non - normative crisis precipitating episode (e.g. shoplifting). The objective nature of the event is, at least from a starting point, of prime importance in the individuals construction of the crisis. Further to this, postulating the situational / maturational dichotomy is fraught, since it is very difficult in many cases to differentiate between the two. While most observers would agree that adolescence constitutes a maturational crisis (in Erikson's sense) and that bereavement constitutes a situational crisis (in Lindemann's sense) many life experiences have both maturational and situational aspects. Marriage or having a baby as well as being situational can also be described as being maturational in that they, like starting school, can be seen almost as rites of passage to the roles and responsibilities of adulthood.

## 2.5 SUBJECTIVE ASPECTS OF CRISIS

Reuben Hill has postulated an 'equation' that summarises the conceptual framework of most family crisis research: (a) the event interacting with (b) the families crisis meeting resources, interacting with (c) the definition of or meaning attributed to the event by the family produces a crisis X. While these three categories a. b and c are closely related it can be seen that the first focuses on the event or social and physical situation, the second on past and present family functioning, and the third on the psychosocial reactions of individual members, and more

importantly of the family as a group. The major focus of crisis theory has been the question of why for some families almost any out of the ordinary event precipitates considerable family stress which leads to a perception of crisis.

Hill points out that crisis proneness is in effect the phenomenon of experiencing stressor events more frequently as a crisis because of meagre crisis meeting resources and failure to learn from past experiences with crisis. It is difficult however to leave this equation as it is, since it would seem to pose almost as many questions as it answers.

There are perhaps three areas where questions should be asked. These are to do with the objective event, the families crisis meeting resources and the families definition of the event.

## 2.6 THE OBJECTIVE EVENT AND THE INDIVIDUAL'S SUBJECTIVE INTERPRETATION

Hill's first factor, the objective event, if he means the actual hardship associated with the event, is not an entirely satisfactory way of judging the magnitude of stress which comes to bear. Despite the assertion by stress theorists that stress is an environmental demand on the individual which is conceptually and analytically separate from the person experiencing the event or circumstances surrounding the event, it



can with justification be argued that hardships do not arrive objectively and non - contextually at the family's boundary for them to define and respond to. Hardships of whatever seriousness are influenced to a greater or lesser extent by cultural and subcultural factors. Indeed Hill and Boulding (1949) recognised this process as "cultural definition". Thus not only is an event attributed with meaning between cultures, but also within cultures, and between time spans. This latter argument is supported by the literature which highlights many instances of situations where what was once a stress provoking event, precipitated less stress in replications carried out decades later. For example, Cavan's (1959), review of the family literature written during the depression noted that unemployment often led to family disorganisation. However, Thomas (1980), found unemployment among both white collar, and manual workers to be apparently much less of a stressful event. Similar conclusions have been arrived at in the area of divorce.

Reiss and Olivieri however, point out that it is a practical matter to determine the cultural definition of stressful events by drawing upon the tradition of "life events research", begun by Holmes and Rahe (1967). This school of research arose from epidemiological research which related conditions of social disorganisation to mental disorder. Holmes and Rahe built on these findings in developing the Social Re - adjustment Rating Scale, an instrument which measured the amount of social re-

adjustments or "adaptive challenge", associated with a range of changes in people's life patterns. This research has been further developed since the 1960's, (see for example Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend 1978). Although these ratings scales were constructed for use on individuals, Reiss and Olivieri assert that "quite unintentionally...(they) ... have given us some preliminary tools (to determine the cultural definition of an event). When these researchers ask a group of judges to rate the "magnitude of stress" inherent in an event, they are in effect asking them to read their own culture. They are asking: "in your culture, how much stress or life change will this event produce in the average person".( Reiss and Olivieri, 1980 p 439)

Reiss and Olivieri developed this approach further by interviewing whole families as a group in order to arrive at a list of events, then subsequently using these events as a check list which a second representative group of families, rate in terms of the amount of stress which would be precipitated for the average family in their community. Thus it may be that the way in which a family or individual perceives an 'objective event' depends to a large extent upon what their experiences and resulting shared beliefs tell them about this event. In the next section, these shared beliefs will be discussed in the context of the family's ability to meet a perceived crisis with effective responses.

## 2.7 THE FAMILY'S CRISIS MEETING RESOURCES

It is obvious even at an intuitive level that there are a number of factors within the family which may make them vulnerable and be of decisive importance in influencing whether an "objective" event which has been culturally defined as stressful, and which impinges on the family will be responded to with adequate crisis meeting resources. For instance, a family living at a financially marginal level may have fewer physical resources to muster in a financial crisis than would a more affluent family who have such resources as knowledge of and access to credit, financial advice etc..

This is only a small part of the family's crisis meeting resources however as Hill points out. Angell (1939) was among the first family sociologists to attempt to isolate resources in family organisation which by their presence or absence kept the family from crisis or urged it into crisis. Two concepts arose out of his work. The first was family integration, which he defined as "bonds of coherence and unity running through family life, of which common interests, affection and a sense of economic interdependence are perhaps the most prominent." The second was 'Family Adaptability' by which he meant "the family's ability to meet obstacles and shift course as a family" (Hill op cit). Subsequently, family adaptability has been highlighted as

the more important of these two factors. Particularly in the areas of stress which necessitate role shifts within the family.

Later commentators emphasised the importance of adequacy / inadequacy of family organisation in the face of stressors as a major factor in the precipitation or non precipitation of a crisis. They postulated that an organised family must have agreement in its role structure, subordination of personal ambition to family goals, satisfaction within the family as a result of its meeting the physical and emotional needs of its members and goals towards which the family is moving in concert (Reiss et al 1980 ). It can be seen that there are a number of commonalities. in the two postulates.

Indeed this emphasis on family solidarity and flexibility occurs throughout the literature, albeit in different forms and with different emphasis. Reiss and his associates (1980) have formulated a conception of the crisis meeting resources of the family. Their approach synthesises the internal structural aspects of the family which as discussed above hitherto were almost the sole focus of commentators on this area, with an account of the inter - relationships between the family and the larger community. From this synthesis they outline 3 dimensions of crisis meeting resources. They evolved a concept of 'family paradigm' which envisages a broad range of family problem solving routines based on an enduring conception each family holds about

the nature of the world and its place in that world. The three dimensions of these family paradigms, and thus the family's problem solving resources are postulated to be:

1) Configuration. Reiss et al postulate that problem solving ability in families reflects a fundamental conception by the family, that the social world in which they live is ordered by a coherent set of principles which they can discover and master through exploration and interpretation. Families which are high in configuration arrange their household activities in ways which reflect a clear grasp of the family's role in the larger community. The family which is low in configuration, it is postulated practice rituals which reflect idiosyncratic ties to their past and which are separate from the larger community. The difference then seems to be that high configuration family's recognise the influence of extra familial influences on them as a unit and thus their ability to influence these extrafamilial factors. The low configuration family appears to act or react in terms of the "here and now" or in terms of what they have always done without any connection being made between their actions, the outcome, and the characteristic of the family as a group. This is similar in nature to some of the faulty decision making strategies outlined by D'zurilla and Goldfried (1972), which will be discussed in a later chapter.

2) Co-ordination. This is postulated to be the extent to which members take note of and accommodate each other's problem in order to arrive at a collective strategy. Reiss et al suggest that these problem solving patterns reflect the family's belief that they occupy the same experiential world. In addition, high co-ordination families see themselves as facing their social world as a group, and also see the external world as treating them like a group. It is further proposed that high co-ordination families show a greater degree of cooperation in terms of roles and planning in their everyday lives than do low coordination families

3) Closure. Reiss et al define closure as the degree to which families delay their final decisions about a problematic situation until they have all the evidence they can obtain. Families who show delayed closure were observed to approach problems with few preconceptions, and will attempt to consider many possible solutions to a problem. Families on the other hand who show 'early closure', were observed to reach decisions early and to stick with them

These three dimensions were observed to be orthogonal. Thus every family could be portrayed as occupying some point within a euclidean

space bounded by the poles of these three dimensions.

Reiss et al differ from other theorists (e.g Hill 1965) in that within their conception of crisis, the definition of the event is seen as being part of the coping response as opposed to being seen as occurring before the individual adopts coping strategies. It is also seen as being 'active', initiating a series of further actions, and continuing to function throughout the 'coping period'. Unlike other theorists, Reiss et al argue that some crises may never close spontaneously, and this is supported by Boss's (1980) study of fathers missing in action, where she found many families unable to accept the fathers status many years after the initial event.

## 2.8 SPOUSE IMPRISONMENT AS A CRISIS.

In terms of crisis theory, then, spouse imprisonment is one catastrophic event which comprises in Hill's and Eliot's terminology, both dismemberment because the male partner is taken away from the family, and demoralisation because of perceived stigma. This demoralisation will often be a result of a shift in the status of the family as perceived by family members, and this will depend in part upon social reactions towards them.

There is however, a sense in which spouse imprisonment if it is seen as being the result of authority acting against the family's interests, might be seen as being precipitated by extrafamilial events, and thus as having the potential to strengthen the family's perceived solidarity. On the other hand, if the man's

imprisonment is seen as being his fault, then it is likely that the event will be much more disorganising for the family, and the man's status within the family will be much diminished. In any event, another result of the crisis of spouse imprisonment, is likely to be an element of role shift and role conflict within the family.

The extent to which the event is perceived as a crisis, will depend on a number of factors. These would include the objective circumstances of the family, the social context in which the family perceives itself to exist, and linked to this, what Hill and Boulding termed the cultural definition of the stressor event. As well as the factors mentioned above, the individual stress proneness of the wife and the other family members will have a large effect on the way in which the family as a group will perceive the situation and react to it.

According to a number of stress theorists, the way in which the family functioned as a group before the husband's imprisonment will have a major effect upon the way in which it perceives the event and how it reacts to it. The degree to which the family perceived themselves to be 'close' and the extent to which they cooperated with one another in facing the outside world will influence how they approach the crisis of spouse imprisonment.



For the wife, crisis theory would predict that there will be an initial period of disorganisation , characterised by for instance grief, withdrawal, inactivity, or heightened anxiety, and maladaptive strategies for coping with the event. This period would be followed by a period in which the woman progressively adopts new responses which are suited to the various situations which arise, until she is functioning at a stable level which may be the same, lower, or indeed higher than before her husband's imprisonment. Crisis theory would also postulate that having dealt with one crisis would make it more likely that the individual would have less difficulty dealing with subsequent crises. Thus it may be that according to this theory, if other factors are constant, those wives of habitual offenders would perceive spouse imprisonment as being less stressful and would be able to cope better than the wives of first offenders. Finally, crisis theory would predict that those wives whose husbands were being released back into the family might encounter a new crisis as a result. This crisis would be characterised by 'ascension' i.e the addition of a new member to a homeostatic group. In this sense, the family group, having adapted to the absence of the husband in terms of roles and relationships, perceives the return of the husband and the need for subsequent rearrangement of roles as being a crisis.

## 2.9 CRISIS THEORY AND OTHER THEORIES OF STRESS

It would appear then, that a stressful event as viewed by crisis theorists, lies, as in other stress theories, firmly in the province of the individual's or group's perception. As in the transactional models of stress outlined in the previous chapter, a crisis is viewed as a set of demands being made on the 'focal organism' which interacts with the organism's crisis meeting resources to provide a definition of the event and also to determine how the event is responded to. It is in the area of the crisis response, however, that stress theory may differ markedly from crisis theory. Where most theories which deal with the relationship between stressors and humans would predict only very general cognitive and somatic responses, and would hardly attempt to predict specific behavioural responses, crisis theory takes a much more 'developmental' approach in attempting to outline a very specific cognitive and behavioural process through which the individual 'invariably has to go' in order to reach an accommodation of the event. Similarly, where most versions of crisis theory would maintain that the response process to crisis would be time - limited, and would invariably come to an end when the subject had worked through the various stages of adaptation, no such prediction could be made by interactional or transactional stress theorists.

In spite of these differences, however, it would seem that there is a large degree to which the theories concur on the role of individual differences in the coping abilities of the individual



and his or her responses to stressful events. In the next chapter, it is intended to discuss a number of psychological phenomena which may play a large part in constituting the individual differences observed in coping with stress.

## CHAPTER THREE

### DECISION MAKING AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

#### COGNITIVE FACTORS WHICH MAY INFLUENCE THE REACTION TO STRESS

##### 3.1 DECISION MAKING

The literature on stress and crisis outlined in the previous chapters would seem to confirm that a failure to cope in a perceived crisis involves to a large extent a failure in high quality decision making. Decision making style has been examined by Mann and Janis (1977) who found that people ultimately reach decisions by a number of routes, and that the quality of the decision making style can play an important part in both the appropriateness of the resulting behaviour and in how long the decision is adhered to, that is, how long it stands up to challenges. They postulated that the individual in conflict is likely to adopt one of five decision making styles;

- 1) Unconflicted adherence, where the individual continues doing what he or she was doing previously, because with minimal evaluation it appears that this is the best option.

- 2) Unconflicted change, where the individual adopts a new course of action because with minimal evaluation, the old behaviour appears flawed and the new course is perceived to be better or is recommended by another person.
- 3) Defensive avoidance, where the individual undertakes a course of action, knowing it to be undesirable, but seeing it as the only course open to them, or the best of a poor selection available. Information which confirms the inappropriateness of the behaviour is ignored or avoided and rationalisations to reinforce the choosing of the behaviour are employed
- 4) Hypervigilance where an individual, realising that some urgent action has to be taken, hastily scans possible courses of action and, driven by anxiety, selects one and 'hopes for the best'.
- 5) Vigilance where the individual, aroused by a moderate degree of stress, is sufficiently encouraged to scrutinise the options carefully, work through the alternatives and possible outcomes, assimilate any new information which could be useful and then select a course of action which maximises the probability of success and minimises the probability of failure.

Even if the decision making style utilised by the individual is identified, the questions remain as to the factors which influenced that style, how that style influences coping ability, and how that decision making style might be changed. In the remainder of this chapter, these issues will be addressed.

### 3.2 EXPECTATIONS

Phares (1976) states that human behaviour is usually motivated by the desire to attain or avoid a particular goal or reinforcement. A positive reinforcement is one which a person wishes to attain while a negative reinforcement is one which the individual seeks to avoid. Successful experience of a given behaviour in the past will serve to increase the individual's expectation that the same behaviour will work in the future. Alternatively, failure will decrease the individuals expectation that the behaviour will achieve the desired outcome, and the behaviour is less likely to be repeated. However, behaviour is not inevitably strengthened by reinforcement, rather it is determined by the degree to which a person expects that their behaviour will lead to a particular reinforcement or outcome. The expectation that reinforcement is contingent upon behaviour in a given situation will allow the reinforcement to affect the choice of behaviour. If no contingency is perceived, then choice of behaviour is unlikely to be affected by the nature of the reinforcement.

The individual is able to generalise expectancies from specific situations to situations which they perceive as similar, and these generalised expectancies, which have been likened to learning skills can influence behavioural choice in a wide variety of situations (Rotter 1966). This introduces the concept of locus of control

### 3.3 LOCUS OF CONTROL

'locus of control' was defined by Rotter (op cit) as 'a generalised expectancy concerning the degree to which people believe in internal or external control of reinforcement', i.e. whether they believe rewards are contingent on their own behaviour and are controllable by their own actions, or whether they are contingent on luck, fate, chance or the actions of powerful others, and are therefore outwith their control. A person who generally expects that important events are causally linked to his own behaviour is said to have an internal locus of control. A person on the other hand who has a generalised expectancy that life events occur regardless of anything that he or she does is said to have an external locus of control.

A number of studies reviewed by Rotter (1966) and Phares (1976) would suggest that an internal locus of control is associated with greater effort and achievement in coping with or attaining control over the environment. It is postulated that because of superior cognitive processing abilities, internals seem to be more alert to aspects of the environment which provide useful information for future behaviour, take steps to improve their environmental conditions, place greater value on results gained as a result of skill or achievement, are more concerned with their own abilities and are more resistant to influence.

This would suggest that an internal locus of control is more likely to be associated with success in achieving a desired change and in resisting unpleasant environmental cues. It would seem to raise the question then as to whether the individual who has a more internal locus of control and who encounters a crisis producing event is likely to show greater perseverance and effort in coping with the crisis than their externally oriented fellows.

In addition to the hypothesis that externals show a lesser degree of motivation in sustaining a prolonged problem solving effort, Phares (1976) suggests that an external locus of control may have functional value in neutralising potentially threatening situations, since failure is no longer seen as threatening if it is seen as a function of uncontrollable forces. Interestingly this is consonant with the findings of McGrath discussed earlier where it was suggested that the individual would suffer less stress as a result of encountering a situation which was obviously beyond his capabilities to cope with than if he were to encounter a situation where he was unsure of his own capacities. An external locus then, may provide the individual with a defence against anticipated failure. Davis (1970) found that these what he called 'defensive' externals, behaved more like internals on certain experimental tasks (presumably those they did not expect to fail in) and that they behaved differently from what he called 'congruent' internals.



If an internal locus of control is predictive of greater effectiveness in problem solving, then it may be predicted that increased effectiveness will bring about a change in perceived locus of control. Indeed Hinrichsen (1976), cites studies of counselling centre clients, college low - achievers, and a variety of psychiatric patients which would suggest that shifts in locus of control have been induced both therapeutically and spontaneously as a result of perceived success.

There is a body of literature, however which suggests that Rotter's bipolar typology may be somewhat simplistic. Mirels (1970), advocated the inclusion of at least two factors; personal control and social system control, and, more radically, Levenson developed scales in terms of 'internal', 'chance', and 'powerful others'

#### 3.4 LEARNED HELPLESSNESS

Another area in which a belief in the non - contingency of behaviour and outcome has been demonstrated is in the phenomenon of learned helplessness, first described by Seligman (1975). Dogs were given electric shocks which they could not escape by any response open to them. Twenty four hours later they were placed in shuttle boxes and exposed to shocks which they were free to escape from. Two thirds of the dogs made no attempt to escape from the shocks, evidently as a result of their previous experience of inescapable shocks. It was postulated by Seligman

that the dogs who did attempt to escape already possessed some experience of escaping from aversive stimuli. This hypothesis was tested by giving some dogs practice at escaping before they were placed in the Pavlovian hammocks. As predicted, these dogs did not develop the learned helplessness displayed by the naive dogs.

These experiments were replicated in human subjects by Hiroto (1974) and Hiroto and Seligman (1975). In these laboratory experiments subjects were exposed to an aversive noise stimulus which could be avoided by a given avoidance response in a finger shuttle box. It was found that those subjects who had been pretreated with an uncontrollable aversive stimulus were slower to learn the avoidance procedure than naive subjects. In later experiments by Hiroto and Seligman, where the pretreatment aversive stimulus was replaced by an unsolvable discrimination task, results confirmed that the uncontrollability had indeed affected learning and that the trauma of the pretreatment aversive stimulus was not an essential element.

As a result of his observations, Seligman postulated that learned helplessness comprised three interrelated components;

- i) a motivational deficit characterised by a failure to initiate escape responses

- ii) A cognitive component or associated deficit characterised by an inability to profit from occasionally successful escape responses
- iii) An emotional component characterised by listlessness and passive acceptance of the shocks.

It was proposed that because of their exposure to inescapable shocks the dogs learned that nothing they could do would affect outcome, and thus that nothing they did mattered. This learning was generalised into other situations, and produced the observed deficits even where learning was possible

Subsequent demonstrations of learned helplessness in humans point to a similarity between learned helplessness and internal locus of control. Hiroto (1974) suggests that both factors erode motivation because they contribute to a belief in response - outcome independence. More recent work, however suggests that the relationship is more complex than this, and that its exact nature requires clarification.

One of the major applications of learned helplessness to a complex failure of adaptation is its use as a model for human anxiety and depression (Seligman 1975). Seligman argued that there were distinct similarities between the causes, symptoms and amelioration of both learned helplessness and depression. However, the later literature on learned helplessness (Abramsom

et al 1978, Miller and Norman 1979), casts some doubt on Seligman's original postulate. Among the objections to Seligman's original formulation is the failure by some studies to find evidence of a motivational deficit. While some subjects did fail to learn possible responses, this was not because they failed to respond completely. Further, the learned helplessness produced in humans does not often generalise beyond the specific experimental situation, while the learned helplessness theory posited a generalisation of the individuals belief in his own helplessness. Indeed Roth and Kubal (1975) suggest that a moderate exposure to non - contingent reinforcement produces an enhanced performance rather than a deficit, such deficits only occurring after prolonged exposure. Petersen (1982) argued on the basis of empirical evidence that a belief in the non - contingency between response and outcome is not a necessary requirement of helplessness, and states that 'in short, the simple explanation of the observed helplessness effects, i.e. uncontrollable events leading to expectation of response / outcome independence which in turn leads to interference with objectively possible learning seemed not to do justice to the complexity of human helplessness.' (Petersen 1982)

These objections brought about a reconsideration of learned helplessness as it applies to human behaviour, with critics arguing that a more sophisticated account was necessary in order to account for human's more complex cognitive abilities. This

then led to a reconception of helplessness theory in terms of attributions concerning outcome, and a greater focus being placed on personal rather than universal helplessness, and the formulation of attribution theory.

### 3.5 ATTRIBUTION THEORY

According to the reformulation of learned helplessness theory then, experience of negative uncontrollable events and an expectation of future non - contingency of behaviour and outcome may or may not be necessary, but are not sufficient conditions to explain pervasive helplessness. Rather it is postulated by attribution theorists that the nature and extent of deficits following the experience of negative uncontrollable events are influenced to a large extent by the causal attributions made by the person.

Attribution theory is concerned with people's everyday explanations of events and experiences. 'Attribution' refers to the process whereby one seeks to understand one's social environment, mainly through attributing various characteristics and intentions to the actors within it. Attribution theory is concerned explicitly with how people attempt to find appropriate causal explanations for behaviour or more generally for any event in their social world. This theory which has as its central tenet that inter-personal descriptions are the outcome of attempts to explain the observable behaviour of self and others,

(Eiser 1986), arose from the work of Fritz Heider in the nineteen forties (e.g Heider 1944).

Heider proposed inter alia that individuals tended to make 'person attributions' rather than 'situation attributions' and that a primary function of individuals' attributions was ego protection. This was manifest in a tendency to attribute blame for self failure to others. In 1958 Heider built upon his idea of people as 'naive scientists' and studied how individuals link observable behaviour to unobservable causes. Heider maintained that by doing this the individual was attempting to create 'organisation out of chaos' and thus attempting to introduce an element of predictability and a sense of control in their social world. The individual distinguishes between internal and external causes. Internal causes lie within the individual (e.g ability willingness effort personality character etc), and external causes lie outwith the individual (e.g luck, actions of others, situational factors etc). The observers social world is made more predictable by the use of each type of factor in particular situations.

The most recent manifestation of the attributional model comprises three dimensions:

i) internality - externality. This dichotomy relates to whether the individual perceives an event as being due to factors

within him or herself or alternatively due to factors outwith him or herself for example the situation.

ii Stability - unstable. This dichotomy relates to whether the person perceives the event as being due to relatively permanent factors or to transient factors

iii) Specificity - globality.

This relates to whether the person perceives the vent as being due to causes which occur in a wide variety of situations or due to factors specific to the particular situation

The individual's attributional system it is postulated can be conceptualised as occupying a particular euclidean space within the parameters defined by these three sets of poles. The dimensions would be orthogonal.

Petersen (1982) hypothesised the relationship between attributional style and psychological disturbance. For the purposes of this argument I have transposed them to the relationship between attributional style and perception of stress precipitating events. If for instance a situation perceived as a crisis were attributed internally rather than externally, then the symptomatic responses to crisis would result in a loss of self esteem. If the crisis were attributed to relatively permanent factors (stable attributions) as opposed to transient factors(unstable attributions) then the symptomatic responses to crisis, it is hypothesised would be persistent and long lasting.

Finally if the crisis were attributed to causes which were likely to occur in a variety of situations (global attributions) as opposed to causes which are limited in their extent (specific attributions) the the symptomatic responses would be pervasive.

Brown (1986) describes a consistent attributional style associated with depression in which the causal explanations for bad events are characteristically different from those given for good events: 'Depressives are consistent in that they take the darkest possible view. Bad things derive from personal unchanging and general causes such as low ability or unattractiveness, and good things result from situational unstable and specific causes such as luck, or another person's good humour, etc.'

Thus this theory can provide an account of why some individuals perceive uncontrollable situations in terms of personal failings, even when such situations are in actuality uncontrollable. For example, Brown and Harris (1978), in a study of poverty and deprivation among women found helplessness and low self esteem to be a central feature even though the circumstances in which they existed were objectively uncontrollable.

It is interesting to note the similarity between the symptomatic responses contingent upon perception of stress, and the cognitive - behavioural manifestations of depression and learned



helplessness of listlessness passivity low self esteem and re-learning difficulty. Indeed, a plethora of studies would suggest that attachment and loss, particularly the loss of a spouse, exacerbates both physical and psychiatric morbidity. For example, Parkes & Brown (1972) found that bereaved subjects suffered to a greater degree from depressive illness than did non - bereaved controls, and Clayton found that young bereaved suffered from both physical and psychological distress, and were taking anti-depressants and anxiolytics with greater frequency than were controls.

This symptomatic attributional style contrasts with the attributional bias which it would seem, people often use to protect their own self esteem. Davis and Coggans in an unpublished paper identify two types of bias which may be used by the individual in an ego- defensive way:

i) Self serving bias predicts that the individual will, by making attributions which are external transient and specific for bad events and internal stable and global for good events, maximise credit for their own achievements and minimise blame for their own deficits.

ii) Positivity bias is similar to self serving bias in that people attribute to external causes for negative behaviour and internal causes for positive behaviour. However positivity bias

also predicts that people, as well as giving credit to their own actions will also give credit to the actions of others.

A failure to utilise these biases it is postulated seems to be characteristic of those who suffer from depression.

The predicament of individuals who perceive themselves to be in a stressful situation, then, may be likened to a state of learned helplessness. If a person feels out of control of his or her situation, then that person may very well feel that what he or she does cannot affect what happens. If such a belief becomes established, then the learned helplessness syndrome of passivity, listlessness low self esteem and re - learning difficulty is likely to occur. Further, if a person encounters a wide array of problems; social, emotional, financial etc which often constitute the one perceived crisis event, a situation may result where the person's problems seem so complex, intractable and interwoven, that nothing the person does seems to have any effect.

It may be argued that there are parallels between this situation and attributional style in depression which have important implications for the individuals potential to affect change successfully. If the individual attributes his or her difficulties and failed responses to factors which are internal, stable and global then he or she may further react by becoming passive, listless and depressed. Similarly if he or she sees the

situation and failed responses as being due to factors which are situational, transient and specific then he or she is more likely to make more effort to overcome problems and to be more active and attentive in addressing the difficulties. Similarly, internal attributions for success and external attributions for failure should serve to reinforce expectations of personal control and ability.

An interesting footnote, here, is provided by the work of Langer (1975). From observations of attributions for chance events, Langer formulated the construct of 'illusion of control', which he defined as 'an illusion of personal success probability inappropriately higher than objective probability would warrant.' Thus for example, Langer cites Goffman (1967) who pointed out that Casinos were likely to dismiss blackjack dealers who had a run of bad luck, and Henslin (1967) who found that some dice gamblers attributed success to skill and claimed to be able to make dice fall in a certain way. In a series of laboratory experiments, Langer found that those individuals who attributed a positive outcome in a chance situation to personal ability and a negative outcome to chance or other external factors were less likely to experience helplessness than those who attributed the negative outcome to personal factors, or attributed the positive outcome to external factors. The interesting point is that in an objectively uncontrollable situation those with an illusion of control would be unlikely to be more successful relative to those

who had no such illusion, but they would be unlikely to experience stress as a result. Apart from supporting attribution theory, such findings introduce the idea that 'success' is not a necessary condition for stress reduction through 'coping', but that other factors may be involved. This aspect of coping and control will be discussed in more detail in a subsequent chapter.

### 3.6 SELF EFFICACY; A UNIFYING THEORY OF BEHAVIOUR CHANGE?

Bandura (1977,1985), has developed a theory concerning the way in which people judge their capabilities and how cognitively mediated expectancies of outcome and personal effectiveness determine the initiation and maintenance of behaviour change. Bandura (1977) differentiated 'outcome expectations', defined as a person's estimate that a given behaviour will lead to a certain outcome, from 'efficacy expectations' in that while a person may believe that a particular course of action will produce a given outcome, if he or she entertains serious doubts about being able to carry out the necessary course of action, such information does not affect his or her behaviour. Thus, outcome expectations may be seen as providing the initial incentive to change in that they will provide the individual with the opportunity to decide whether the behaviour is worth engaging in given the outcome. After this, provided an individual has an incentive to change, it is the strength of his or her efficacy expectations which will determine whether change will be initiated, how much effort will be expended and how long it will persist in the face of aversive

stimuli. Bandura argues that self efficacy is more reliable as a predictor of performance than is expected outcome.

Bandura describes four sources from which people derive information with which perceptions of self efficacy are constructed:

- i) Enactive attainment
- ii) verbal persuasion
- iii) Vicarious experience
- iv) physiological arousal

Of these, it is postulated that verbal persuasion is of limited value, and while raising efficacy expectations to some extent may concomitantly result in an illusory boost to perceived self efficacy which is rapidly extinguished as a result of one's actions. Performance attainment on the other hand is seen as being most influential in that it is based on actual performance accomplishments. Performance based sources of information, it is postulated tend to be more successful in achieving behaviour change and the more practice an individual gets in coping with problematic situations, the more successful he or she is likely to be.

A strong sense of self efficacy is unlikely to be affected by occasional failures, which are more likely to be attributed to

lack of effort rather than lack of ability, and once established, it is likely to generalise to other situations, particularly ones in which performance has previously been debilitated by perceived personal inadequacies, (Bandura 1985).

It is postulated, however that information from whatever source, only becomes instructive through cognitive appraisal. A number of factors may affect a person's performance which have little to do with their own capabilities and judgements of effectiveness. These involve an inferential process in which the relative contributions of a variety of personal and environmental factors are assessed. Perceptions of self efficacy are more likely to increase if

- i) success is achieved in situations which the individual perceives as difficult
- ii) if only a moderate effort was required to achieve the goal
- iii) if little or no external help was available
- iv) and if success was part of an overall pattern of improved performance.

Judgements of self efficacy are further enhanced when the individual perceives that he demonstrated an increase in personal control, and that successful performance was relevant to problematic situations which occur frequently. (Annis 1986)

People who greatly overestimate their capabilities may undertake activities which are far beyond their reach and as a result suffer needless failure which undermines their efforts and can be damaging. People on the other hand who underestimate their abilities are also likely to suffer costs by limiting the degree to which they develop their potential and failing to achieve optimum performance in situations which have evaluative significance, ( Bandura 1985)

### 3.7 CONTROL EFFICACY AND EFFECTIVENESS

Bandura differentiates self efficacy from locus of control in that the latter is concerned with causal beliefs about the relationship between action and outcomes rather than perceptions of personal effectiveness. A generalised belief in outcomes as contingent upon one's own behaviour can be demoralising if one is lacking in appropriate skills and therefore has a low sense of self efficacy. It seems that to develop effective mastery, a belief in the personal determination of outcomes needs to be accompanied by competencies which enhance perceived efficacy.

Similarly helplessness generated through perceived low self efficacy is separable from that which results from what Seligman (1975) called a lack of response - outcome contingency. For instance a person may not try to change a situation because he feels that he does not have the ability. This would seem to

differ from feeling that his abilities have no effect on an unresponsive environment, as Bandura would postulate.

Expectations for the contingency of behaviour and outcome in both learned helplessness, (Abramson, Seligman, Teasdale (1978), Miller and Norman (1979) ), and locus of control, (Phares 1976), have been related to causal attributions made by the individual. Phares suggested that people with an internal locus of control have a tendency to make internal attributions of responsibility for events. Bandura (1985) proposes that attributions relating to factors such as task difficulty and effort are not only important in the cognitive processing of efficacy information, but that perceived self efficacy also influences the causal attributions a person makes. Collins (1982) found that children who regarded themselves as highly efficacious attributed failure to insufficient effort whereas those who felt inefficacious attributed failure to low ability. This would suggest that an increasing sense of personal efficacy should also be associated with an increasing expectation of one's ability to influence outcomes. Attribution of failure to lack of effort does not imply a denial of personal ability, according to Bandura. 'People who regard themselves as highly efficacious act, feel and think differently from those who perceive themselves to be inefficacious. They produce their own future rather than simply foretell it.'



Thus increasing self efficacy should also be accompanied by increasing expectations for control of reinforcement and, if as social learning theory predicts, (Rotter, 1966; Phares (1976, Bandura (1985) ), expectancies generalise from the specific situations, increasing self efficacy should also influence generalised expectancies for the contingency between behaviour and reinforcement.

A model which utilises the concepts outlined in this chapter has been proposed by Marlatt and Gordon (1980), and Cummings, Gordon and Marlatt (1980). This model was constructed to describe the postulated cognitive and behavioural processes inherent in the process of relapse in a variety of addictive behaviours. It would seem however that it can have similar utility in describing similar processes inherent in the perception of and response to other high risk situations:

If an individual holds positive outcome expectations for the effects of a particular coping response, based on selective recall of previous experience, then the likelihood of use of that coping response is increased, thus increasing the probability that a successful coping response will be utilised.

A failure to cope with negative emotional states, social or financial pressures interpersonal conflicts, or other problems

inherent in a high risk situation, results in a lowering of perceived self efficacy and an increased sense of helplessness. This is particularly likely if such failure to cope occurs in the early stages of the perceived crisis and is not attributed to lack of effort or highly unusual circumstances.

This decrease in perceived self efficacy may contribute to a further failure to cope, and a further resulting decrease in self efficacy and increase in perceived helplessness is likely . On the other hand if, when faced with a high risk situation the individual effects a successful coping response, perceived personal efficacy is likely to be increased and would be strengthened by repeated coping successes, particularly where these are attributed as resulting from the individual's own ability.

The fact that any crisis situation is multi-faceted comprising as it does a variety of different problems and situations, begs the question as to how the individual can be prepared for all eventualities. In terms of interventions at least, a possible solution to this problem proposed by Alsopp and Saunders (1987) and Alsopp Carr And Saunders (in Press), is to utilise the generalised approach to problem solving outlined by for example D'Zurilla and Goldfield (1971). This approach comprises five stages; problem definition, brainstorming of possible solutions, selection of response, action and evaluation. Such generalisable

skills training, it is postulated, will, inter alia, increase the probability of high quality decision making in the event of a high risk situation, thus increasing the probability of a successful coping response being initiated. In terms of Marlatt's model, and Bandura's theory such a successful response would increase the probability of subsequent positive outcome and efficacy expectancies, thus increasing the probability of further successful responses to subsequent high risk situations.

In clinical trials with a sample of cognitively unimpaired dependent drinkers in an alcohol problems clinic, it was found that an experimental group performed relatively better in terms of number and severity of relapses than a control group and a placebo group. This improvement held constant for six months, subsequently decaying until after twelve months there was little difference between the groups. (Alsopp, Carr, and Saunders (In Press) ).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### COPING AND CONTROL

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION: ANXIETY, COPING AND CONTROL

One of the striking features to emerge from the discussion in the previous three chapters is the extent to which the concepts of control and lack of control dominate, either implicitly or explicitly, models of stress and coping. Control is implicated in the models of stress discussed in chapter one, whether that be in controlling the amount of demand being placed on the individual as in Lazarus's (1966, 1976), definition of stress; whether the individual perceives himself to be in control of his environment, and linked to this, whether the individual perceives himself as having control over the consequences of his behaviour in response to stress. Indeed Frankenhauser found lack of control to be a major determinant of whether a situation is perceived as stressful or not. In terms of anxiety, (which it is argued here is a stress response), there is a large body of literature which focuses on the role of loss or lack of control in its origins and maintenance, (e.g Barlow 1988, Garber 1980, Mandler 1966,1972, Seligman 1975). Indeed, many theorists in this area would seem to a greater or lesser extent to relate anxiety to the individual's expectations about the nature of the world and their ability or inability to influence events. For example, Mandler (1972) saw anxiety as being synonymous with

'helplessness'; Gray's (1987) model of anxiety responses, postulated that they resulted from a mismatch between expected stimuli and actual stimuli, and Beck's 'inhibitory system which is postulated to come into effect upon the initial recognition of potentially threatening stimuli, and his 'anxiety reduction system' which comes into play later would both seem to be related to an attempt to gain mastery over potentially threatening situations.

The cognitive correlates of stress and coping, some of which were discussed in Chapter Three, can to a large extent, be seen to be concerned with desiring control, perceiving oneself to have control or perceiving oneself not to have control. Pearlin et al's concept of 'mastery', the concept of self efficacy, locus of control, learned helplessness, and attribution theory all involve explanations for behaviour based upon an individual's perceived control.

There is a host of evidence, both empirical and clinical, to support the contentions put forward in these theoretical models that control is implicated in the ways in which individuals deal with stressful events and also in the consequences of stress for individuals. Animal experiments have produced evidence to suggest that loss of control may be stressful (Stroebe 1969, Hanson 1976, Mineka and Kelly 1989 for review); that it may induce behavioural responses which in humans would be analogous

to those found in anxiety and depression or both (Mineka and Kelly 1989 for review); and that control over unconditioned stimuli in an experiment may have lasting effects up on the animal's subsequent behaviour in a similar situation (Mineka and Kelly op cit)

In terms of human laboratory studies, Miller and Seligman, (1975) found that those subjects who could not control an aversive stimulus reported his or her self to be more anxious than those who could control the stimulus. Glass et al (1973) found that between two groups of subjects exposed to an aversive stimulus, the group who perceived the stimulus to be controllable performed better on a concurrent task than the group who perceived the stimulus to be uncontrollable. Similar findings were obtained by Matthews and McLeod in 1985. Finally, Brier et al (1987) found that exposure to inescapable noise led to increased reports of both depression and anxiety, although the reports of depression were less frequent and of lesser magnitude than those of anxiety.

Clinically too, uncontrollability has been linked with anxiety, and latterly with depression. Williams and Watson (1985) found that among patients with a fear of height, self percepts of efficacy (in Bandura's terminology), were negatively associated with degree of anxiety. Rachman et al (1986) found that a majority of their agoraphobic sample reported a decline in feelings of control in weeks during which they had an anxiety

attack and an increase in feelings of control in weeks during which they had no attack. Alloy et al, (cited in Mineka and Kelly, op cit), postulate that anxiety accompanies 'uncertain' helplessness, but that the more sure one becomes that one has no control over the course and outcome of the event, the more likely it is that depressive symptoms will be mixed with anxiety symptoms.

#### 4.2 WHAT IS CONTROL

It is however probably erroneous to automatically suppose that every theoretician used the construct of control in exactly the same manner, and that control therefore is a unitary integrating construct. While control may in fact be an integrating construct, it is likely that each use of the concept of control is constrained by the theoretical orientation within which it has been incorporated, and that each precise meaning of the construct is thus specific to that particular usage. With this in mind, it is intended here to examine ways in which the concept has been used and to consider ways in which control may be linked to coping strategies and ability.

Fisher, (1986), provides a good account of a number of descriptive typologies of control and it is these typologies and the empirical evidence to support them which will be discussed here.

An early classification was provided by Averill (1973), who used the concept to describe the cognitive and behavioural efforts of the individual when dealing with stress. Averill distinguished 'behavioural control' defined in terms of the availability of a response which can modify objective characteristics of the situation; 'cognitive control' which involved mental processing of relevant material to reduce stress; and 'decisional control', which involved making choices between different courses of action. It can be seen that these three are very closely interrelated. Indeed it may be that what is being discussed is not three types but actually three aspects of the same thing. For example, in terms of Janis and Mann's theory of decision making discussed earlier, a person would need to have a high level of decisional control in order to have a high level of behavioural control. Indeed the individual's perception that he or she is exercising decisional control and behavioural control may in fact constitute cognitive control, which is defined as 'that which reduces stress'.

Where Averill's typology was based upon 'actual' control, other typologies are based much more on the individual's perception of control. Thompson (1981) outlined a four category typology, based largely upon perception of or belief in control as follow:

Behavioural control which Thomson describes as a belief that one has a behavioural response available that can affect the



aversiveness of an event. This type of control was said to involve terminating or reducing the intensity or duration of an event, or changing the timing of an event.

Cognitive control was defined as the belief that one had a cognitive strategy available that can affect the aversiveness of an event. Thomson distinguished between 'avoidant' cognitive strategies and 'sensitising' cognitive strategies, i.e strategies which allow the individual to ignore or deny the event Vs strategies which allow the individual to reduce the aversiveness of the event by heightening awareness of it and thinking it through.

Information which the subject acquires about the event, and the way in which this information is used. Thomson proposed that different uses of information, (and indeed the ways in which information is conveyed to the subject) will lead subjects to react differently to stress.

Retrospective control was defined by Thomson as the beliefs about the causes of a past event. This form of control, then can be seen as a form of attribution, and may in fact be dependent on the individual's general attributional style. It would seem to be important not least because it would be likely to affect future perceptions of behavioural and cognitive control as well as retrospective perceptions.

Thompson further identified the timing of the belief in control as being important. Thus belief in control is seen as being of importance not just while the event is being experienced, but also during the anticipation of the event, and upon recalling the event. This model postulated that behavioural control could reduce the aversiveness of an event, reduce pre-event anxiety, improve performance on tasks carried out concurrently with the stressful event, and affect the post-event experience. Cognitive control was seen to have positive effects on pre and post event effects as well as reducing the aversiveness of the event. Retrospective control was argued to affect the post-event reaction. Importantly, Thompson argued that controllability per se did not necessarily ameliorate the stressfulness of an event, but what was important was the meaning given to the event and the perceived control of the event.

It is perhaps important here to enlarge upon Thompson's inclusion of information as a form of control. It would seem that one of the major functions of information in this context would be to make an event 'predictable' in that it can help the individual to form an expectation about the course of an event or the consequences of implementing or failing to implement a particular course of action. Whilst this may frequently be the case, it would seem also to be true that an individual may be able to predict the course of an event and also any contingency between a response which could be made and an outcome, and still perceive

him or her self to have no control. For example, as discussed in Chapter three, Bandura (1977) postulates both outcome expectations and efficacy expectations as being determinants of whether a particular course of action will be initiated. Thus the individual may perceive that a certain course of action would bring about a particular desired result, (positive outcome expectation), but also perceive him or her self as not having the requisite capabilities to carry out such a course of action, (negative efficacy expectation). This would seem to be particularly important for the present study, given that the received wisdom is that spouse imprisonment is less stressful for those who are habituated to it (i.e the wife's of recidivists), and those who live in 'delinquency areas', (West). These topics will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter.

#### 4.3 HOW IS CONTROL UTILISED ?

The discussion above highlights the question as to what are the factors which will influence the use of control strategies in order to reduce stress. The influence of efficacy and outcome expectations has been discussed briefly above, and this issue will be discussed further in a later section of this chapter. In this section however, it is intended to examine ways in which the decision is made to utilise control.

Miller has constructed two hypotheses to account for when control and coping are preferred and stress reducing and when they are

not.(Miller 1979,). The first hypothesis is what she called the 'Minimax Hypothesis', and it was formulated to address the issue of control. the second is what she called the 'Monitoring and Blunting Hypothesis', and was formulated to account for the use of information in coping with stress.

Minimax Hypothesis states that individuals are motivated to minimise the maximum danger to themselves. Therefore they will attempt to achieve control when doing so, '...allows them to put an upper limit on how bad a situation can become' (Miller 1979). An implication of this hypothesis is that the individual, by making a judgement as to whether control is possible before the event actually occurs, can in fact, by anticipating the exercise of control as a fall back position, reduce stress whether the control is used or not. Another important point of the minimax hypothesis for Miller, however is that in those situations where the individual perceives that another person's having control of the situation would be most stress reducing for the individual, he or she will relinquish control to that more powerful other. Thus it is postulated that the individual does not always seek personal control as a means of stress reduction, but makes judgements as to what will be most stress reducing and chooses that option. Miller cites an example of a patient undergoing a medical procedure. By relinquishing control to the doctor, he or she is reducing the aversiveness of the event for his or her self. If however they are told by the doctor that breathing in a

certain way will reduce the pain of the procedure, they will experience less stress as a result of the belief that they have a control strategy available to them.

Monitoring and Blunting Hypothesis As Miller (1980), states this hypothesis proposes an 'explicit interaction between control contingencies and informational and coping choices'. Miller proposed that stress is highest in aversive situations when the individual is concentrating most on monitoring the situation, (i.e seeking information ), and is concentrating less on 'blunting', (i.e cognitively avoiding ), the negative aspects of the event. Stress is reduced when the individual can psychologically blunt the aversiveness of the event. When a stressful event is controllable, high monitoring and low blunting are the main responses, and information is preferred. Thus, although information may raise stress, it may also enable the individual to exercise controlling behaviour which according to the minimax hypothesis will be stress reducing. Conversely, when an event is uncontrollable, high blunting would be the norm since a high level of information seeking would merely force the individual to face the reality of a stressful situation which could not be controlled.

Miller's hypotheses then, would seem to provide possible explanations as to the types of coping response adopted, whether it be information gathering in order to increase predictability,

denial or avoidance, active strategies which are geared towards amelioration of the aversiveness of the event, or relinquishing control externally. This account is based upon the individual's perception of whether control is available or not. What Miller's hypotheses do not do is to attempt to provide an account of the factors which influence the decision as to whether control is possible for the individual or not. These factors will be examined in the next section.

#### 4.4 FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE THE PERCEPTION OF CONTROL

It would appear that the perception that control is possible in a given stressful situation is important in determining the response to stress in the short term, and if it is accepted that the individuals expectations regarding future events are based on previous learning from past events and general living, then perception of control is important in the long term also. But what are the factors which influence the decision as to whether control is available at any particular time ?

##### 4.4.1 Generalised Expectations Of Controllability

Perhaps the first and most basic determinant of perceived control is the person's generalised belief about their own ability to control events in the external environment. If a person perceives no means of attaining control, (whether correctly or incorrectly), then the person is effectively helpless. Further, 'if expectations of controllability/uncontrollability become

generalised over many different situational contexts, they can be described as beliefs about controllability', (Ohman and Bohlin 1989). Thus what is being discussed here is the individual's locus of control. If the individual believes that the world is structured to be controllable and that control is just a question of effort and skill, then they are more likely to attempt to attain control in a potentially stressful situation than would an individual who perceives the world to be unpredictable and himself to be subject to the vagaries of external circumstances and chance. In other words, those with an internal locus of control are likely to be better able to cope because they are more likely to attempt to attain control than would externals.

Although this proposition is intuitively appealing, it would seem that there are a number of areas where questions might be asked. The first would seem to be about what happens in the situation where internals who see the world as controllable attempt to control situations which are objectively uncontrollable and fail. If this is generalised across a number of situations, how does the individual in this circumstance maintain his or her belief in ability to control events? Bandura for instance would maintain that such a situation would be damaging in terms of both the individual's outcome expectations and their efficacy expectations discussed in Chapter Three.. Attributional theory might posit that the individual has an internal stable attribution for success and an external transient attribution for failure. That

is the person attributes success to personal factors such as skill etc, while attributing failures to transient factors outside himself, like luck, the behaviour of others etc. Indeed Langer's concept of assumed control discussed earlier, would imply that this is what is happening. A further possibility is suggested by the results of a study by Gregory (1978). in this study it was discovered that internals took more time over a task than externals when there was a penalty attached to failure, but that there was no difference in the time taken between internals and externals when there was a reward attached to success. These findings are suggestive of several things. Firstly that individuals may believe that they have control over negative outcomes, but that such control does not necessarily cover positive outcomes. Secondly that internals may make judgements about the differential costs of failure in different situations, and base both their coping strategy and ultimately their beliefs about control on such weightings. Thus if an individual fails in a situation where there is seen to be minimal penalty for failure, such failure would have less of an impact on the individual's beliefs about control than failure in a situation where the cost of failure was much higher.

A second question which should be asked about the individual's locus of control concerns the unitary nature of the construct. as discussed earlier, a number of studies have suggested that locus of control may in fact have a number of different



components such as personal control, social system control, and control by powerful others, (e.g Mirels 1970, Reid and Ware (1974). If locus of control is not a unitary construct, then is there such a thing as a person with an internal locus of control, or will each individual have a perceived locus of control for different situations? This would seem to be linked to Miller's Minimax hypothesis where the individual will reduce stress by relinquishing control to a powerful other.

#### 4.4.2 Domains of Control

In terms of the individual recognising that control is or is not possible in a given situation, it is likely that within the context of external Vs internal locus of control, there must be eventualities in which even the most internal individual will recognise that control in the form of direct behavioural responses does not reside within him or her self, and that optimum control takes the form of relinquishing control. Few people would attempt an appendectomy on themselves. It may be however that the work of Paulhus and Christie, (1981) sheds some light on another aspect of the decision making process involved in perception of control. These authors conceptualised control in three major domains;

Personal Control, concerned with the self and personal achievement in non-social contexts

Interpersonal Control, Concerned with social interactions and the social context within which the individual lives

Sociopolitical Control, concerned with the wider society and the state

The individual may perceive him or her self to have or lack control within each of these domains, and in terms of reacting to stressful events may make decisions about where the control lies. Thus the individual may fail to find the means of control within one domain, but find it in another. Further the individual may perceive that they have no control within a particular domain, and if control is perceived to lie within that domain, then the individual is effectively helpless. This model would address one of the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter, that is, 'control over what?'. The possibilities exist that the individual may attempt to reduce stress not only by controlling the contingencies between response and outcome, but by engaging in a large number of other strategies from anticipatory control of both the self and the external environment, through control of affective state while experiencing the event, to control of affect and the external environment in the aftermath of the event. It also addresses the aspect of reducing stress and attaining control over outcome by relinquishing control to expert or powerful others

#### 4.5 DECIDING WHAT AND HOW TO CONTROL

Fisher, (1986), provides a hierarchical model of processes which may be involved in deciding whether control is available and what and where it is. Fisher suggests that individuals may make an initial superordinate decision about whether control is or is not possible. This decision may be based on the individual's locus of control, but it will certainly be influenced by the nature of the situation and the skills required. Thus a person may recognise that in general they have the potential for control, but that in the particular current situation he or she does not have it. If the decision is made that control is possible, then the individual may have to make further decisions about the skills required and whether success is likely using these skills or not. Fig 4.1 shows diagrammatically an adapted version of Fisher's Hierarchical model based upon the concept of the individual making decision about and within the domains of control outline by Paulhus and Christie, (1981). Within this model, then, the way in which the individual makes decisions about the domains to consult would seem to be important in influencing whether the person attains control or not. For example, the person may habitually attempt to gain control within one particular domain, whether it be the most appropriate or not. He or she may consult the domains sequentially, deciding on one and failing to consult the remainder etc.

#### 4.6 IMPLICATIONS OF CONTROL FOR SPOUSE IMPRISONMENT

It would seem obvious from the above discussion that while locus of control may be important, attempting to explain the coping ability of the female partner of an imprisoned man in terms of a generalised belief in personal control outwith the context of the realities of the situation would be simplistic. The situation of spouse imprisonment is objectively one in which control has been removed from the individual. An example of this is that one of the major problems mentioned by wives in their coming to some form of accomodation to their husband's imprisonment was the lack of information available to them, (see chapter five for a fuller discussion of this issue). As discussed above, several models of control see information and predictability as being important both as a form of control in itself (e.g Thompson 1981), and in the sense that seeking information is used as a strategy for attaining control, (Paulhus and Christie 1981). Thus the unpredictability of the circumstances the woman finds herself in, and the fact that she is in reality unable to gain the information needed for her to use in order to cope may mean that control is objectively, impossible for the woman to attain. In these circumstances, then while it might be posited that because the wives of men who had a long record of previous imprisonment would be likely to see the circumstance as being more predictable and would be more likely to have adopted strategies for retaining control in the past, it may equally be that the woman has

attempted to cope and failed, and thus generalising these failures would suffer from a lack of belief in response - outcome contingency and negative efficacy expectations. Thus it may be that those wives who are encountering the situation for the first time have not had time to 'learn the bitter truth', while the information available to more experienced wives only serves to make them expect failure.

In this situation it might be expected that these women would use some strategy akin to Miller's 'blunting' of the negative aspects of the situation by avoiding information about the event, in order to reduce the stressfulness of the situation.

For many women, while using interpersonal control, and more particularly sociopolitical control would be of distinct benefit to them, it would appear from the literature on prisoner's wives that perceived stigma, withdrawal from the wider community antipathy towards welfare organisations and a lack of knowledge of their rights in the situation would make the use of such domains unlikely. Thus for these women, they have little to fall back upon except personal control of the situation, and if a belief in a lack of personal control pervades, then the woman has few if any resources to utilise in coping.

Fig 4.1 Model of Decision Process in perception of control  
(Adapted From Fisher (1986))

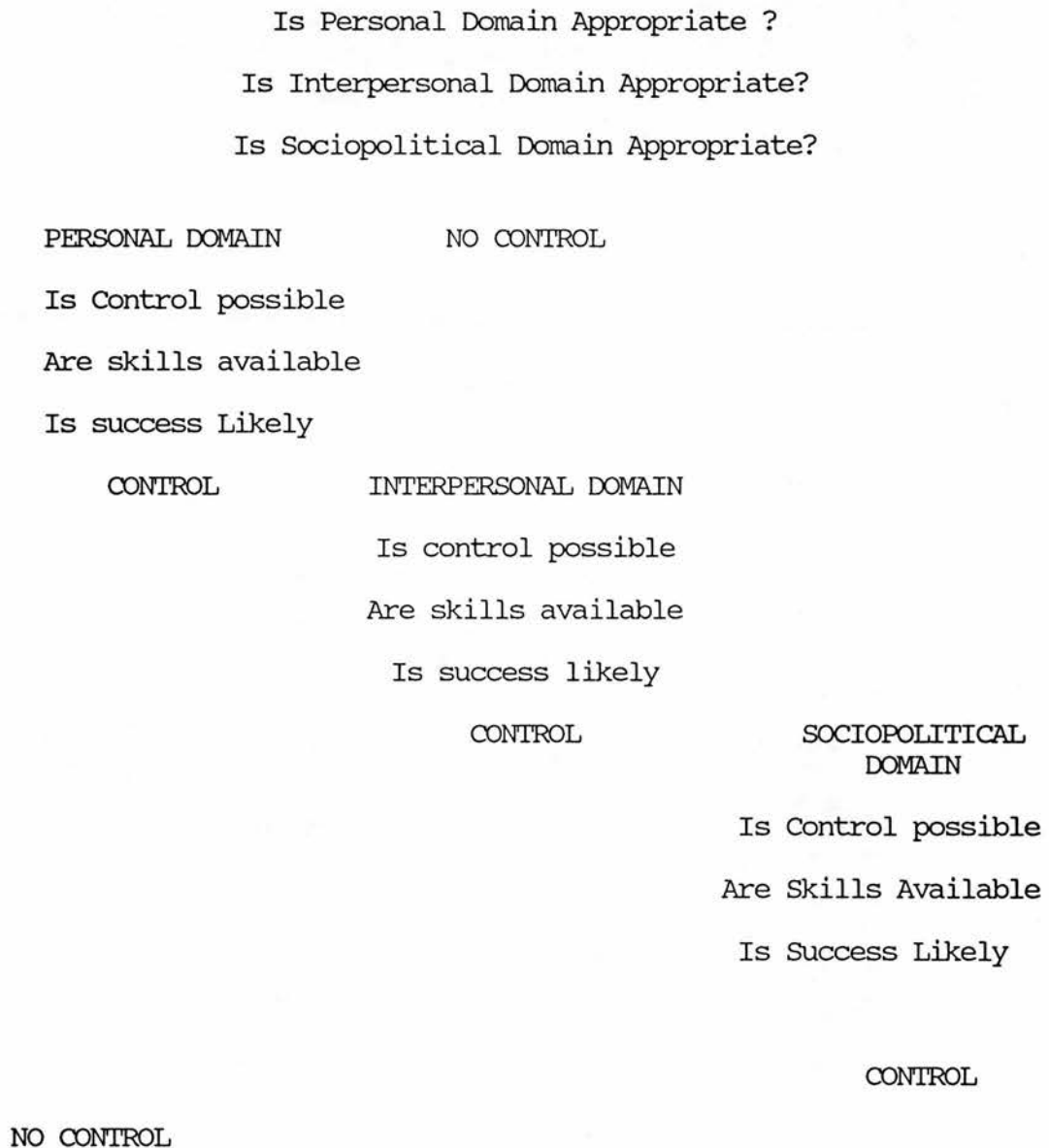
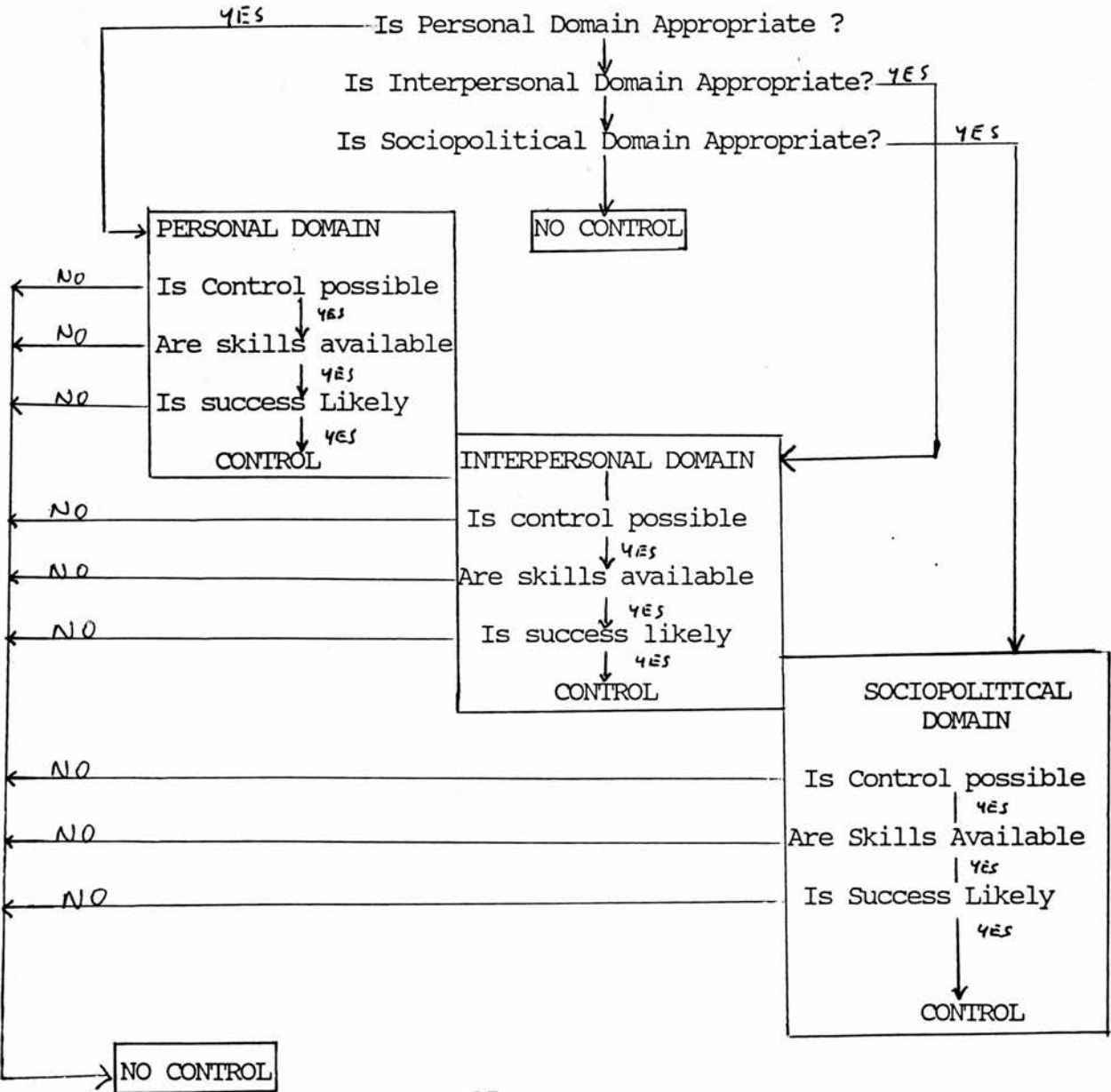


Fig 4.1 Model of Decision Process in perception of control  
(Adapted From Fisher (1986))



PART II  
SPOUSE IMPRISONMENT



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SPOUSE IMPRISONMENT AS A STRESSOR: THE COMPONENTS OF THE PROBLEM.

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

There would seem to be a consensus among those who are interested, that the experience of spouse imprisonment creates a range of needs which, historically, has not been met. As Vercoe stated in 1971

'The families of prisoners are a group whose problems and needs are low on the scale of public awareness, partly because of ignorance, and partly because of an ill-defined hostility which attaches to the prisoner and extends to his family labelling them as not deserving'.

Tomlinson and Morris (1972) provide a more structural explanation, stating that 'in a society where a welfare state provides services well defined to meet the specific needs of particular groups, the wives of prisoners are the responsibility of no single statutory agency'. Indeed this phenomenon would seem to be international. For example, Anderson in 1967 pointed out that in an Australian context prisoners families' needs were not met as a result of the narrowness of role perception in welfare agencies and the lack of coordination between such agencies, and Rozenkrantz and Joshua in 1982, highlighted the same lack in the United States.

This lack of practical interest would seem to be mirrored in the academic world, if the paucity and age of British literature on

the subject can be taken as an indicator. The first major empirical study of prisoners' families in Britain was undertaken by Pauline Morris in 1965, and between then and the start of this research the only other study of any significance was that carried out by Monger and Pendleton between 1970 and 1973. (Monger and Pendleton (1973), Monger Pendleton and Roberts (1977) Apart from these the literature on the subject in the British context would seem to consist of small scale localised studies or studies of specific areas of the problem (e.g Maurice (1970)), limited circulation mimeographed papers (e.g Sugarman 1972 NACRO (Various) and the occasional research dissertation, (E.G Smith 1984).

This is not to say however that there has been no major empirical work done in this or related areas. Empirical work relevant to a discussion of spouse imprisonment can perhaps be divided into several categories in terms of focus. First there is the general literature on family disruption as a result of loss of or temporary separation from an adult family member, in times of war and /or military service, (e.g Hill 1958 economic depression ; and Divorce (Weiss 1975) Issues relating to these have been discussed in detail elsewhere, and will be referred to as appropriate in this chapter. The second class of literature is that which focuses on the family's role in the rehabilitative process. Thirdly there is that literature which deals

specifically with family problems related to spouse imprisonment. It is proposed to consider these in the next section.

## 5.2 PROBLEMS FACED BY PRISONERS' FAMILIES

The first empirical study of prisoners families was carried out as early as 1928 by the U.S Dept Of Labour in the state of Kentucky (Goodblood 1928). As a result of the finding that financial hardship was a major problem of spouse imprisonment, the rate of remuneration for prison labour was increased. Another major study of the families of prisoners in the U.S was carried out ten years later (Sacks 1938) in which it was found that successful coping was related to income, education and marital adjustment.

Subsequently, a number of American studies examined spouse imprisonment from the perspective of Family relationships (Brodsky 1975), and of family crisis theory, (Blackwell 1959) and the effects on the children of women prisoners, (Zalba 1964), before Morris undertook her study in the UK and another almost simultaneous study was being conducted in Australia (Anderson 1967).

Since then work on the area has continued apace in the US, while as mentioned above the only major empirical work done in the UK was the Monger and Pendleton study. In the remainder of this

section then, much of the literature which is cited originates from outside of the UK. In many ways this might compromise some of the findings, particularly those which are culture or policy specific, as being not relevant to the UK context. However, it would appear from the literature that many of the phenomena highlighted are of universal significance..

Tomlinson and Morris (1972), identified three domains in which problems may occur for the wife of an imprisoned man:

- i) Practical Problems
- ii Social Problems
- iii) Emotional Problems.

It is argued here however that while practical problems and social problems may be distinguishable, no such distinction can be made with regard to emotional problems. In earlier chapters, it was argued that the experience and perception of a stressor comprised both an objective domain and a subjective domain. Emotions do not exist in vacuo but derive their existence from events that take place within the individuals experience. Conversely, the individuals perception of an objective event is determined at least in part by an affective component. Thus the perception of any stressor will be the result of the interaction of two components, which might be termed objective burden and subjective burden. Indeed it might be argued that the objective

problems caused by male spouse imprisonment are little different from the problems caused by other forms of family demoralisation and dismemberment, such as divorce. What does differ perhaps is the meaning attributed to it by the individual. Indeed this has been commented upon by Parker and Rooney (1972), who maintained that the imprisonment of a spouse and father was qualitatively different from other types of family dismemberment. Given the above it is intended to consider the components of the problem in terms of the objective event and the female partner's subjective perception of it.

### 5.3 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

#### 5.3.1 Financial Problems

As early as 1928 it was acknowledged that the imprisonment of a male spouse was followed by a sharp decrease in the family's living standards, to the extent that families were, 'scarcely able to eke out an existence' (Goodblood 1928), and this particular finding, to a greater or lesser extent, has been a feature of almost every study since. In the British context, Morris found that prisoners families were 'living under conditions of considerable poverty'. Anderson found money problems to be a major stressor in her Australian study, with many of the women in her sample 'being left initially destitute

after the imprisonment of the husband. In another study of prisoners wives, Daniel and Barrat ( 1981) reported that 75% of their sample claimed to have not enough money to maintain their present house, 70% could not afford necessary clothing and 55% stating that they did not have enough to maintain an adequate diet. Contrary to these findings, however, an, American study (Schneller 1975) found that 'economic hardships were largely kept in check by welfare subsidies, provision of public housing and the ability of many wives to obtain work', or alternatively that the absence of the husband made the family eligible for welfare., It should be noted however, that the definition of 'hardship' is a moveable feast, and that policy and cultural differences between the UK and the USA may negate the generalisability of Schnellers findings. Interestingly, even in this study, 65% of respondents reported being 'worse off or much worse off' as a result of the husband's imprisonment.

It has also been suggested that upon the male partner's imprisonment female partners may find themselves with debts which were accrued by the husband and which they knew nothing about, or that the true financial situation is less favourable than they thought while the male partner was at home, (West Glamorgan Probation Service, 1982).

Linked to this several studies have found that the wife commonly has to deal with welfare agencies for the first time, (Morris

1965, Monger and Pendleton 1972, West Glamorgan Probation Service 1982). In this situation it was found that the wife was often unaware of the benefits to which she was entitled, and even where she was, she often experienced difficulty in claiming them. Anderson found that 60% of respondents reported that even after applying for financial assistance, they were worse off than before the husbands imprisonment.

Even in those situations where the woman has eventually managed to regularise her financial situation, it is often the case that the anxiety of being the sole provider constitutes a continuing source of stress in the wife. This too can be a double edged sword in that after a more or less lengthy period of coping with the financial aspects of the family, the woman may have to anticipate adjusting to the husband's return and the consequent financial upset and possible role adjustment which may have to occur. Liker (1981) investigated this issue and found that such anticipation was for the wife a source of anxiety and dissatisfaction with the husband.

#### 5.4 DEALING WITH THE PENAL SYSTEM.

Aside from dealing with the bureaucracies of the welfare system, the woman, if she is to maintain contact with her spouse will have to become enmeshed in the complexities of the penal system. This would seem to present another practical difficulty for the wives of men in prison. Empirical work would suggest that

difficulties are experienced as a result of lack of basic information regarding penal terminology , the regimes, e.g where the husband will be, and for how long, what the rules are regarding contact with the husband etc. Daniels and Barrat (1981) for example in a study of prisoners wives found that 90% of respondents expressed a need for such information, with 80% expressing a need for 'a great deal of information'. This need was reported to be greatest in the early stages of separation. Schwartz and Wientraub (1974) found that such information was extremely difficult for the women to obtain.

Communication with the husband is another source of problems which has been discussed by a number of studies. As Brodsky (1975) pointed out, 'the visiting conditions in most prisons are designed more with the focus on security than on communication between the prisoners and their families', and Levi(1971) concurs stating that ' the visiting situation does not provide for the possibility for meaningful communication. It is not meant to'. One example of security taking precedence over communication was cited by Morris (1965) who commented upon the fact that the distance from home was not one of the criteria which dictated the geographical location of the man. Thus many women had long journeys to undertake in order to visit their husbands. Indeed Monger and Pendleton (1976) found that in relation to visits, the three most commonly reported problems were 'taking the children', 'demands of the journey' and 'expense', all of which would be



exacerbated by a Man being placed in a prison far away from his home..

The visiting conditions within the prison have been cited as contributing to problems.(e.g Morris 1965). Levi (1971) notes the difficulty presented by the physical conditions in trying to relate to children, and Rosenkrantz and Joshua concur stating that visiting arrangements are rarely appropriate for parent/child interactions. Indeed it has been noted that even men and women often run out of things to say because of the physical constraints on their ability to communicate (Levi 1971) These constraints, including a lack of privacy would seem, then to militate against the woman receiving much overt emotional support from her husband, and indeed in Andersons study few respondents reported discussing problems with the husband during visits. Most reported talking about superficial things such as the weather etc.

In general it appears that visits are often seen as 'depressing' 'disliked' 'hard to relax in', and even 'degrading' and 'pointless'( West Glamorgan Probation Service, 1982). In Anderson's study she noted comments in the vein that the visits were 'almost more trouble than they were worth' Similar potential problems would seem to apply to the sending and receiving of letters. A number of Authors have commented upon the importance of letters in prisons, (Brodsky 1985), and about

the damaging effects of having letters read as part of security procedures (Levi 1971). Indeed it may be that the sending and receipt of letters is a good indicator of the strength of the prisoner's close relationships. Glaser (1964) highlighted the importance of letters to imprisoned men in the parole process.. He classified relationships in terms of the number of letters received from the wife, with those men who received five or more letters a month as having a very active relationship; between two and five 'active'; less than two 'sustained relationship', and no letters, 'no relationship'. He found that 75% of men with a very active relationship received parole while only 34% of those with no relationship received parole

## 5.5 SOCIAL AND RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS

### 5.4.1 Problems With Children

Morris (1965) has suggested that 'it is perhaps amongst children that one might expect to find the impact of the father's separation and / or criminality to be present.' In practice however, Morris found it impossible to distinguish between the effects of imprisonment and the effects of other types of separation. This difficulty has been encountered by subsequent research. For instance Friedman and Essilstyn (1965), evaluated teachers ratings of a group of prisoners children and two control groups. They concluded that there was a 'depression' among the

prisoners children, which was linked with the fathers imprisonment. Sack (1977) found that 50% of their small sample of children were disturbed in some way, particularly if the mother had spoken of the father in negative terms. A different approach to the question took an epidemiological approach examining the backgrounds of groups of offenders to establish common factors. Griffiths and Rundle (1976) found a 'strong family history of delinquency, associated with larger families and more parental discord. West and Farrington (1979) asserted that delinquent lifestyles tend to reproduce themselves across generations, and similar findings were obtained by, for example Osborn and West (1979), and Wilson (1975). However it should be noted that in the West and Farrington study, other factors which were statistically linked were juvenile delinquency were low family income, large family size, low IQ, and poor parenting behaviour, and in the Wilson study the two most likely patterns of parental offending which seemed to influence juvenile offending were where a parent had committed a 'major' offence, or where the parent had committed no offences. Thus there would seem to be some equivocation as to the nature of any epidemiological link. Indeed there is an equally strong body of literature which would suggest that the behaviour observed by the authors mentioned above is not specific to the phenomenon of parental imprisonment, but occurs in many areas where there is a disruption of family functioning. (e.g McCord et al 1962, Thomas 1968, Trunel 1968, Crumley and Blumenthal (1973)) Any

specificity which is observed in this particular situation, might in fact be a result of factors such as the reaction of the wife to the husband's imprisonment and indeed her anxiety about its effect upon the children.

Whether childhood disturbance is specific to prisoners children or not, then, the objective fact remains that wives often have to deal with a deterioration in a child's behaviour upon the fathers imprisonment. This is probably compounded by anxieties of the woman who may see the ostensible reason for the deterioration in the child's behaviour as being much more shameful and stigmatising than the same behaviour as a result of for example the husband being at sea.

#### 5.5.2 Family Relationships

It would appear from the literature that the female spouse's family plays an important part in helping to ameliorate the effects of the husbands imprisonment. As Morris states: 'it is undoubtedly the case that were it not for help from their families, most wives would be seriously deprived both financially and emotionally'. However there may be evidence to suggest that the wife's attachment to the husband may be a cause of some disharmony between herself and her family. Schwartz and Weintraub noted that in their (1974) study of prisoners families a feature was the wife's natal family showing hostility to the husband and putting pressure on the wife to divorce him.

Although this phenomenon does not appear to have been commented upon in other studies, if it does in fact happen then the wife may find herself in the invidious position of having to choose between what is considered to be one of the few sources of emotional and material support available to her, and loyalty to her spouse.

Schwartz and Weintraub also noted that 'the major pattern observed in the relationship between the wife and her in-laws is a reverse of that which is seen with her own parents', and that there is frequently conflict between the wife and her husband natal family. This finding supported Morris's earlier similar finding, (Morris 1965). Thus it may be that whether this hostility arises out of a mutual assigning of blame for the husband's imprisonment or whether it was engendered at an earlier stage, the fact that it exists would mean not only that a potential source of help was closed to the wife, but also that this ongoing hostility might be an additional source of stress while the husband was in prison.

#### 5.5.3 Maintaining Relationship With The Husband

The practical, emotional, structural and administrative constraints outlined above would seem then to prejudice the chances of maintaining a healthy relationship with the husband, and although Rossi et al (1980) reported that women who visited

their spouse in prison were more likely to report that they were satisfied with them in the post release period, there is evidence (for example Morris 1965, Brodsky 1975; NACRO 1975) to suggest that the marital relationship is more likely to break down in direct relation to the length of time a man has been in prison. It has been argued that these breakdowns may merely be reflecting a situation which predates the man's imprisonment. Hill asserts in the context of army families that very few divorce during the separation who had not already experienced some level of estrangement before the separation. However, Holt and Miller for example, found that contact between married couples decreased during the second year of imprisonment and subsequently, suggesting that 'the marital relationship deteriorates as the years in prison pass'. Other evidence to support the assertion that marital relationships break down during imprisonment is provided by Rossi et al (1980). This American study highlighted the contrast between the number of men who said they were married or cohabiting at the time of release, and the number who actually went to live with their partner upon release. The numbers who actually went to live with their partner varied from 30% of those who said they were married to 50% of those who said they were married. These findings however cannot only be interpreted as being problematic or a source of stress for the wife. Hill (1971) noted that good adjustment can be viewed in two ways: firstly from the perspective of the family unit as a whole and secondly from the perspective of the family unit left behind.

The fact therefore that some men do not eventually return to the family may not necessarily be a negative result for all parties since the wife and children may have made a satisfactory adjustment to the separation which involves not accepting the return of the man after his release. Indeed it has been noted that adequacy of adjustment is not necessarily indicative of or predictive of an adequate or good adjustment to reunion, (Hill 1971). Indeed it may be that a good adjustment to separation might make adjustment to reunion more problematic.

With these comments in mind, then, there are a number of possible reasons why marital relationships of prisoners and their spouses might deteriorate even more than those relationships which have been dismembered for other reasons. Koos (1946) for example noted that when a crisis involves personal recriminations, and is seen as being the fault of a particular member of the family, the position of that family member is often greatly devalued. Supporting this proposition, several authors have observed the effect of imprisonment when it occurs during wartime or is seen as being of a political nature. Schneller points out that in those families where the spouse's imprisonment is seen as a result of racism then the experience by providing a focal point around which the family can rally, can strengthen a previously strained relationship. In any event, although Hill found no correlation between adjustment to either separation or reunion and the number of months the husband had been away from the

family, it would appear that as discussed above, the experience of imprisoned men and their wives is different in that there has been found a relationship between the length of sentence and marital deterioration. This may be because of the length of separation (which is often measured in years rather than months, and also the affective component of spouse separation by imprisonment may be a factor.

Some factors which seem to be predictive of successful family coping with dismemberment have been identified by a number of authors. In a general sense, Schneller found happily married couples suffered more severely and experienced more changes in family situation than those couples who were less happily married. Hill on the other hand in the context of wartime separation found that 'the most important statistically identifiable factors' predictive of successful adjustment to crisis were family adaptability, family integration, and marital adjustment, (Hill 1971), and Blackwell (1959), noted similar findings. Thus it may be that the 'happier family' suffers more, but eventually adjusts in a more satisfactory manner than the less happy family. This proposition would seem to be supported by further findings which suggest that perceiving the situation as a crisis and reacting accordingly, is predictive of good adjustment. (Blackwell 1959; Hill 1971.)

Interestingly it would seem that communication and expressed emotion, and the number of days spent with the family during the



period of separation (Hill 1971); is also indicative of good adjustment. From the discussion above and the very nature of imprisonment it is these very things which are least likely to be possible for the prisoner and his family.

#### 5.5.4 Relationships In The Community And Stigma

The literature highlights to a large extent that many wives of imprisoned men suffer from some degree of social isolation as a result of their husbands imprisonment, (Morris and Tomlinson 1972), although several studies have indicated that both friends and neighbours have been well-intentioned and supportive, (Morris 1965, West Glamorgan Probation Service 1980). In spite of these latter findings, , however, a number of authors maintain that within the community as a whole there is a real or perceived, measure of social opprobrium attached to having a spouse in prison which in a number of ways contributes to the woman's isolation. For example, Brodsky (1975) argues that when a husband is imprisoned,

'the formal social control mechanisms of trial, criminal labelling and incarceration are accompanied by informal mechanisms. The latter processes take the form of hostility and lessened respect towards the family, and shame on the part of the family. Families so stigmatised may seek to withdraw from society as well as seeking greater distance from the inmate, to lessen the sense of degradation.'

Vercoe (1970) discusses an 'ill defined hostility ' towards the families of men in prison, which contributes to a lack of concern about their welfare (and which is presumably perceived by the families themselves), and Crossthwaite went further in citing

cases of direct stigmatisation both by agencies and by individuals.

The behavioural responses listed by Brodsky above were also identified by Anderson, who found prisoners wives attempting to conceal the whereabouts of their husbands, believing that society looked down on them and withdrawing from social activities

However, both Schneller, in his study of the families of black prisoners, and Mays in a study of 'delinquency areas', maintain that among prisoners wives, there is a lack of stigma as a result of a prevailing crime tolerant atmosphere within certain subcultures.

It would appear however, that Davies (1982), exemplifies a different school of thought on the subject of stigma when he states that

'There is a confusion between stigma (experienced) and shame (felt as a result of society's general stigmatisation of the offence or the concept of imprisonment).....Stigma is a minority problem if what is meant is direct community rejection because of the prisoner's state or crime.'

Indeed Morris's 1965 work would seem to synthesise these two latter contentions in that she found little or no perceived stigma among the wives of recidivists, although there was anger at how other children treated theirs. Among the wives of first offenders however there was a fear of stigmatisation which was gradually ameliorated .

In essence then it would appear that deliberate stigmatisation may occur only rarely. However many wives may in fact anticipate it or perceive it as happening due perhaps to their own expectations. In any event if a stressful situation is defined as in chapter 1 as a perceptual phenomenon, then perceived stigma may in fact be as serious and damaging to the individual as 'the real thing'.

#### 5.6 ROLE PROBLEMS

Deutscher (1959) provided a classification of the roles within a marriage:

- i) Sequential Family Roles, having to do with the extent of stability or change in one members domestic roles over time.
- ii) Complementary Family Roles, having to do with the degree to which roles played by different family members fit with one another.
- iii) Concurrent Non-Family Roles, having to do with the number of relationships a family member has outside the family, and their compatibility with family roles.

Anderson (1965), used this classification to consider the effect of spouse imprisonment on the roles within the family. She found a large degree of discontinuity in sequential roles both for the wife and the children, as a result of the need to take on the roles of the husband/father in his absence. The knock-on effect of the mother having to take on new roles is often that the child has to take on some of the roles of the mother.

Role complementarity was also found to be affected with the wife and husband often feeling further apart and concomitantly the roles of the child and the mother often becoming more reciprocal.

Thirdly the woman's concurrent roles are often adversely affected, both as a result of the demands made by new roles within the family and also often as a result of having to develop new concurrent roles, e.g get a job, deal with agencies etc.

It can be seen then that there is in this scenario, potential for role conflict which has been defined as 'the simultaneous occurrence of two or more sets of pressures such that compliance with one would make more difficult or render impossible compliance with the other.', (Anderson 1965). In a later study, albeit in a different context, Kahn (1974) found that role conflict in an employment setting was associated with an increase in perceived stress and a more negative attitude towards the job.

There may also be an element of role ambiguity inherent in the situation described by Anderson. Thus the wife may not have the requisite knowledge about what the role of breadwinner, father, protector of the family integrity etc entails. Role ambiguity has been found to be associated with anxiety and depression (French and Caplan 1973)

Finally it is likely that the role shifts necessitated by the imprisonment of the husband entail a greater degree of responsibility being placed upon the wife. There is a large body of literature which suggests that there are substantial costs to both physical and psychological health associated with demands of responsibility, particularly responsibility for people, which are perceived to be beyond the capability of the individual. For example, Cobb (1973) found air traffic controllers to have an incidence of hypertension which was four times that of a control group matched for age and other risk factors, and Cobb (1974) found middle and upper managers to have a greater incidence of duodenal ulcers than shop floor workers.

The evidence, then, would seem to suggest that role shifts, particularly ones which the individual does not feel adequately equipped for may be perceived as a stressor and be associated with behavioural and psychobiological responses which were described in earlier chapters as being related to stress responses.

PART III  
RATIONALE AND METHODOLOGY

## CHAPTER SIX

### RATIONAL AND METHODOLOGY

#### 6.0 RATIONALE

The purpose of this study was to examine the phenomenon of spouse imprisonment from the perspective of the female partner.

The study was exploratory in nature and the aims were as follows:

- 1) To obtain an up - to - date picture of the types of problems faced by the families of imprisoned men.
- 2) To examine the role played by the length of the spouse's sentence upon the level and nature of problems faced by the women in the sample.
- 3) To examine the role played by the length of time the spouse has been in prison upon the level and nature of problems faced by the women in the sample
- 4) To examine the role of anxiety in the respondents experience of spouse imprisonment.

5) To attempt to identify other factors which have an effect upon the level and nature of problems faced by the women in the sample.

## 6.1 METHODOLOGY

### 6.1.1 Introduction

This research was part of a larger research project and the procedure implemented here was dictated to a large extent by the exigencies of the larger project. Thus in every case the female partners of imprisoned men were recruited through the men, who were contacted while they were in prison.

## 6.2 SAMPLING.

### 6.2.1 Population

The population was defined as all those prisoners who would serve a period of six months or more, who were in a conjugal relationship with a female partner at the time of sentence, and who had children under 16 years living within that familial relationship.

### 6.2.2 Sampling The Prisons

In order to obtain as wide a range of situations as possible, the male respondents, and thus their female partners, were recruited



from a range of six prisons, each being an exemplar of a particular regime in the Scottish system. These were:

- 1) HMP Edinburgh A 'training' prison for first offenders and a local prison for short sentence prisoners
- 2) HMP Perth A general 'training' prison and a local prison for short term prisoners
- 3) HMP Peterhead A prison for 'ordinary' prisoners serving medium and long sentences.
- 4) HMP Barlinnie A local prison for short term prisoners and an allocation centre for medium to long term prisoners.
- 5) HMP Dungavel A 'semi - open' prison for mainly long sentence prisoners
- 6) HMP Penninghame An 'open' prison for medium to long sentence prisoners.

In terms of security categories, which run from 'A' - Maximum security to 'D' - Minimum security, different prisons had different proportions of each category.

Peterhead had mainly 'B' category prisoners with a few 'A' categories

Perth had mainly 'B' and 'C' with a few 'A'

Edinburgh had mainly 'B' and 'C' with a few 'D'

Dungavel had mainly 'C' with a few 'D'

Penninghame had all 'D'

### 6.2.3 Subject Selection Within Prisons

Within each prison, subjects were selected on the basis of the length of sentence being served and the proportion of that sentence completed. It was decided to stratify the sample by length and stage of sentence, primarily in order to obtain as representative a sample as possible. In addition, it was expected that both the length of the man's sentence and the proportion of sentence completed would have a bearing upon the nature and degree of problems being experienced by the female partner.

Prisons were sampled proportionate to their average daily populations, and taking all six prisons as a population a 3 X 3 non - proportionate stratification model was employed as follows.

FIG 6.1 PROPOSED SAMPLING STRATA

	Beginning I		Middle I		End I	
	I	20	I	20	I	20
Short sentence	I		I		I	
	I	20	I	20	I	20
Medium Sentence	I		I		I	
	I	20	I	20	I	20
Long Sentence	I		I		I	

There was no attempt made to assign respondents from each of the prisons to sampling cells proportionate to the prison's average daily population. This strategy would not have been possible since the different prisons served different functions and thus did not always contain respondents within all of the sampling cells. For example, Peterhead did not contain short term prisoners, and Penninghame contained only a very few prisoners within the first third of their sentence. Neither was there any attempt to stratify the sample in terms of security category, since the majority of prisoners in Scottish prisons are category 'B', and only a small minority are category 'D' or category 'A'. It is only among the latter two categories that the regime might have a noticeable effect upon the female partner.

#### 6.2.4 Operational Definitions Used In Sampling Procedure

length categories were operationally defined as follows:

Short term = between 6 months and 18 months

Medium term = over 18 months and less than 36 months

Long term = over 36 months

It should be noted that these definitions do not relate to the actual sentence, but to the amount of time which would be served without parole. Since it was considered that an objective definition of the seriousness of the event of spouse imprisonment must involve inter alia the actual period of time that the individual was to spend in prison, it was decided to recalculate the sentence to reflect this. In making this calculation it was

taken into account that with full remission, prisoners at the time of the fieldwork, who were serving more than thirty days, and who were not in prison for fine default, actually served two thirds of their full sentence.

With regard to the man's children, it was decided that for the purposes of the study, if they were not his biological children, they would be classed as such so long as the man and the woman acknowledged that he was responsible for them.

The sample for the full study then was to consist of 180 'yoked pairs' of men and their female partners who had at least one child under the age of 16 living within a familial relationship at the time of the male partners imprisonment.

for a number of reasons discussed in the next section, 57 women failed to respond to requests for interview. This attrition rate of 31% resulted in a final female partners sample of 123 women.

A summary of the criteria for selection of women to the sample were as follows:

- 1) Female partner of a man currently serving a sentence of six or more months imprisonment in one of six selected prisons
- 2) Had been in relationship with conjugal partner at the time of partners imprisonment

- 3) Had at least one child under the age of 16
- 4) Partner was still in prison at time of interview

A sub sample was selected on the basis of length of sentence and length of husbands absence for longitudinal study over the period of one year.

### 6.3 PROCEDURE

#### 6.3.1 Access To Prisons

Permission for access to prisons was secured initially through Prisons Division at Scottish Home And Health Dept, and secondarily through the governors at the selected prisons. Researchers met with governors of the selected prisons to explain the aims and methods of the project. In most cases a member of the prison management team was designated as a 'link person' whose role it was to facilitate the interviews with prisoners.

#### 6.3.2 Research Procedure

Researchers consulted the prison records in order to preselect prospective respondents in terms of sentence length and stage, recorded marital status and the presence of children. In cases where the records indicated the fulfilment of selection criteria, a request was made to the facilitator for the researcher to interview the man.

It was decided that it would be more appropriate for the researcher to introduce the research rather than prison staff. In each prison therefore the facilitator was given a list of names the researcher wished to interview. Prison officers then approached the man, but were asked to tell him only that a researcher from Edinburgh University wished to interview him, and to ask if he would be willing to see the interviewer. If the man agreed to meet the interviewer, he was brought to an interview room where the researcher explained to him the purpose and aims of the project. If the man was still interested in taking part, the selection criteria were again checked and the interview was carried out. If the man on the other hand declined, he was thanked for his time and dismissed. In this case, no contact was made with his female partner.

On completion of the interview, the respondent was asked if he had any questions. Permission was then sought from him for the researcher to contact his partner. He was then asked to sign a form stating that he had volunteered to take part, that he understood that the information given was completely confidential and that he did/did not agree to a member of the research team contacting his partner. If the man did not wish his partner contacted, his wishes were respected.

In the cases where the man had no objection to his wife being contacted, the researcher sent a standard letter to the female

partner explaining the research and asking her to take part. A stamped addressed postcard was enclosed (see Appendix) which the woman could return declining the request for an interview. The letter stated that if we did not receive the postcard, then we would assume that she wished to be interviewed. If after 10 days no word was received from the woman, another letter was sent confirming that we assumed she wished to be interviewed and the date of interview. Interviews with the woman were normally carried out three weeks after the man's interview.

All interviews were carried out at the woman's home. The researcher arrived at the arranged time, introduced himself, reiterated the purpose of the research and began the interview. upon completion of the interview the woman was asked to sign a form stating that she had been told the purpose of the interview, that she had volunteered to take part

#### 6.4 ATTRITION RATE

With regard to the female partners, there were three points at which any potential respondent could be excluded from the sample:

##### i) Refusal Of The Male Partner To Be Interviewed

As was noted earlier, It had been research policy to meet the male respondents and to introduce the research to them, and after the interview to ask for permission to approach the spouse. The major disadvantage of this method, and one which probably could not be controlled for by any feasible alternative method was our

lack of control at the stage of prison staff fetching the individual from the prison workshop. Although in each prison there was a designated facilitator, it was often the case that the task of fetching men was delegated to a junior staff member and there were certainly a number of occasions where the staff member concerned had spoken to the man and given him erroneous information about the project before he was seen by the researcher. For whatever reasons, a number of men refused to take part in the study, and when this happened, no attempt was made to contact the female partner.

ii) Refusal Of Man To Give Permission For Spouse To Be Contacted  
On A number of occasions the male respondent was quite happy to take part in the study, but when asked if his spouse could be contacted refused. This was a particularly thorny problem from a methodological and an ethical perspective. Firstly we had a completed questionnaire but could not make a 'yoked pair'. Secondly we did not know the reason for the man's refusal and the possibility existed that he had been less than frank during interview, and did not wish us to have his account refuted by his spouse. Thirdly we did not know whether the female partner would have been willing to take part in the study should we have had permission to approach her. Finally we had undertaken to respect the wishes of the man in this respect. For these reasons it was decided that in those cases where a 'yoked pair' could not be obtained cases should be deleted in a pairwise manner. That is,



no attempt should be made to secure an interview from the female partner, and the man's questionnaire was not used in the analysis of the men's data.

iii) Female Partner Refuses To Participate Or Cannot Be Interviewed

In those cases where the female partner refused to participate or was no longer living at the address supplied to us, the decision was made for the same reasons as outlined above to delete the respondents pairwise. In those cases where the woman was not at home when the interviewer called, an operational compromise had to be made between practicality and methodological rigour. It was decided then that in these cases the researcher should write to the woman and attempt to contact her on a maximum of two subsequent occasions before the respondents were finally eliminated pairwise.

As recorded earlier, a total of 57 (32%) pairs of respondents were eliminated from the sample for reasons falling under (ii) and (iii) above. The proportions in each cell in the final sample were as follows:

FIG 6.2 COMPOSITION OF FINAL SAMPLE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
SHORT	12	11	11	34
MEDIUM	17	11	8	36
LONG	22	21	10	53
TOTAL	51	43	29	123

The implications of this attrition rate will be discussed in Chapter Twelve.

## 6.5 INSTRUMENTS.

### 6.5.1 Selection Of Instruments

perhaps the most important methodological problem after selecting the sample, was how to obtain the required information from respondents. For the male partner study, there seemed to be at least three possible ways of obtaining it:

- 1) use of a range of prison records to obtain information on each subject.
- 2) use of a precoded questionnaire issued to all willing prisoners who fulfilled selection criteria
- 3) personal interviews with prisoners who fulfilled selection criteria

A large number of studies have pointed to the utility of using existing documented records either as collateral evidence or indeed as a stand-alone technique of data collection. ( e.g Hansen et al 1953 Hochstim 1967; Neter and Waksberg 1964; Weiss 1968), and it would appear it would appear from at least some studies that it negates the danger of response bias (Parry and Crossley 1950), while being being cheaper per subject than most other techniques (Weiss et al 1968). This method, although it would have allowed the researchers to recruit every prisoner who fulfilled the criteria, was dismissed for a number of reasons. From an ethical standpoint, it was resolved that only those men who gave informed consent would be included in the study. Thus the major apparent benefit of this method, i.e being able to recruit a large sample without attrition would not be a consideration. The major disadvantage of using official records to any great extent was outlined by O'Muircheartaigh (1967) when he pointed out that in many cases the information contained in official records cannot be obtained in a suitable form for the purposes of the research, that the records used in the research may themselves be inaccurate, and that often any differences between what is already known by the investigator and what is detailed on records cannot be reconciled without further fieldwork. These strictures, it would seem apply directly to those prison records which do not deal specifically with operational matters such as length of sentence, date of liberation etc. Much recording of information in prisons is

piecemeal and fairly incomplete. The information retained on prisoners outwith that which serves purely operational functions within the prison differs from prisoner to prisoner depending upon for example whether the man is eligible for parole, whether he has had contact with prison social work unit, his sentence length etc. This together with the fact that much prison reporting seems to be very impressionistic and is in any event carried out by different people at different times, meant that even if the information we required was available, the use of such records without collateral evidence was fraught with potentially major problems of validity and reliability.

The use of precoded questionnaires had a number of attractions. The issues of validity and reliability would, given good questionnaire design and adequate precautions, be better addressed by this method than by the method considered above. There would also have been a saving in terms of time and research effort at the fieldwork stage with this method, and finally the men's informed consent both for themselves and for an approach to their female partners could be addressed by this method.

There were a number of disadvantages however, which seemed to outweigh the advantages to the extent that it was decided not to use it. As a result of there being no personal introduction and supervision of the data collection, there would inevitably have been a large amount of wastage, with questionnaires not returned,

returned incomplete or inaccurately completed. Further it was envisaged that both the wastage and any unreliability should it occur would be likely to be unevenly distributed throughout the sample. The reason for this fear was the assumption that factors such as literacy levels, alienation from 'authority', antagonism to the research etc would not necessarily apply equally within each yoked pair of man and woman. In addition to these fears it was recognised that there was some information which would be almost impossible to obtain through a precoded questionnaire. In particular it was envisaged that it would be necessary when dealing with topics concerning emotions and relationships to employ a careful and tactful approach. A bald precoded question relating to e.g marital relationships would be very likely to arouse antagonism or at best be omitted.

It was decided therefore that a personal interview would be used to obtain the data from the main sample. This approach was seen by the researchers to have the advantage of allowing the researcher to introduce the project personally and to answer any questions or allay any anxieties immediately. Similarly it was seen to provide the opportunity of broaching 'sensitive' topics in a sensitive and tactful manner, thus maximising the probability that these questions would be answered and minimising the possibility that antagonism to the research would be engendered.

Given that this was to the knowledge of the research team the first major Scottish national study of the impact of spouse imprisonment, it was recognised that it was in many respects exploratory. It was also recognised that what was being assessed was not only quantitative indicators such as income and other financial resources, but other more qualitative indicators which covered such areas as physical and psychological well - being, personal functioning and perceived limitations. Thus it was decided that the minimum structure should be imposed on the instrument consistent with obtaining valid and reliable data. For these reasons then it was decided to adopt a semi - structured interview technique in order that the subjective interpretation of events should emanate from the respondents while the course of the interview and the major topic areas covered could be controlled by the researcher.

#### 6.5.2 Semi Structured Interview Schedule

It was recognised that there is an inherent tension between the desire to obtain the benefits which are available through the use of semi - structured interviews and the desire to ensure that the instrument used to collect the data is both valid and reliable. Sudman and Bradburn (1974) present a useful model in which they define the characteristics of the interview in the context of social research. The main features of the interview in this model are as follows:

- i) The purpose of the interview is to collect information which does not affect the respondents needs and interests.
- ii) The interview is a social relationship involving the interviewer and the respondent
- iii) The purposes, rules and limits of the relationship are determined primarily by the interviewer.
- iv) The interviewer acts within a set of rules which limit his freedom of action.
- v) The interviewer is also subject to many of the general norms of social behaviour.

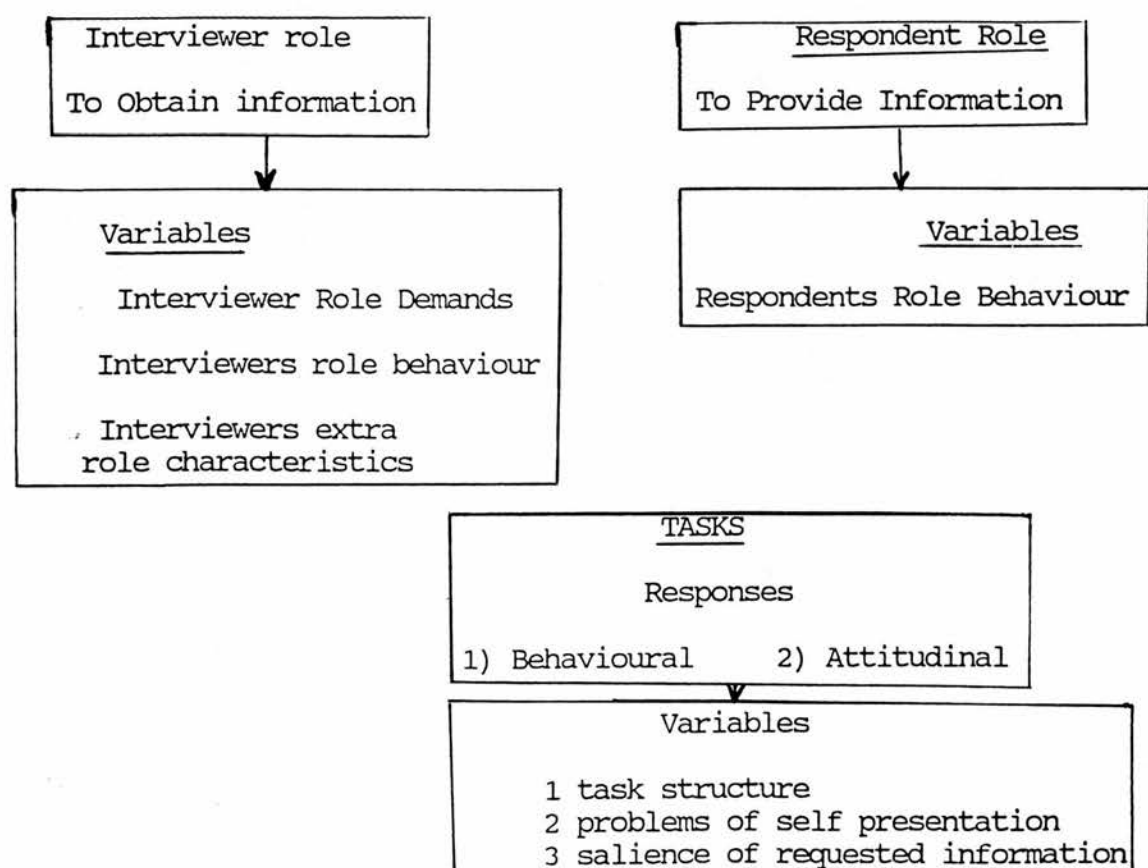
From this basis, then, Sudman and Bradburn outlined the variables within the interview as process which have the potential for introducing response errors as portrayed in table 6.3 overleaf.

With regard to the role of the interviewer, Sudman and Bradburn hypothesise that the greater the degree of structure in the interviewers role, the lower the relative response effects will be.

Regarding the interviewers role behaviour, and the extra role characteristics of the interviewer, although there will always be some divergence between these and the ideal type where they have no response effects, it is part of the function of the interviewer to minimise their intrusive effects.

Similarly with the role of the respondent, the Sudman - Bradburn model would postulate that as a result of low motivation on the part of the respondent, or an interaction between the extra role characteristics of the respondent and those of the interviewer may introduce response effects. Thus once again it would seem to be part of the function of the interviewer to minimise these effects.

TABLE 6.3 VARIABLES WITHIN THE INTERVIEW WHICH HAVE POTENTIAL FOR INTRODUCING BIAS (Sudman and Bradburn (1974)





Within the task itself, the Sudman Bradburn model identifies seven principal characteristics which can affect the magnitude of the response errors in an interview..These are:

The location of the interview and its method of administration

The level of threat and possibility of a socially desirable response

The salience of questions

The position and structure of items

The wording of questions

The length of the questionnaire

The length and difficulty of questions

## 6.6 CONTROLLING FOR RESPONSE EFFECTS IN THIS STUDY

### 6.6.1 Interviewer Variables

Since the interviews with the women were all conducted by the one person, the question of variation between interviewers did not arise. It would be however very surprising that over the course of two years carrying out 120 interviews all over Scotland in all weathers, no variation occurred in the mood and temper of the one interviewer.

The other major factor which had the potential for introducing interviewer bias would be a 'halo effect', since many of the

topics covered in the women's interviews were also covered in the men's interviews. In the absence of time and resources to carry out any major piloting of the instrument a number of strategies for controlling and identifying error were introduced.

a) At the outset, it was decided that the researcher conducting the women's interviews would do so blind, i.e that he would not conduct any interviews with the men, and indeed would not read the men's interviews before speaking to the women.

b) An ex post facto test of interviewer bias was introduced by correlating the objective data from the man's schedule with the same data from the woman's schedule.

The results are as follows:

Spearman Rank Order Correlation

$$r_s = 0.91; N = 123$$

The assumption is that if the objective data, (What Sudman and Bradburn called 'behavioural data', which is amenable to quantitative analysis, and should not be affected by respondents or interviewers subjective interpretation, and can be checked objectively), are highly correlated, Then in the rest of the items in the schedule, (ie what Sudman and Bradburn called 'attitudinal data') any variance caused by interviewer bias should be similarly distributed.

iii) In order to assess the impact of interviewer bias on the reliability of the instrument, the longitudinal subsample was used. Since the schedule was administered to this subsample 4 times over the space of one year, it was possible to correlate the objective data from each woman at various times throughout the year. Thus the data from each woman's first interview schedule was correlated with the data from one other administration of the schedule, this second administration being chosen randomly from between time two, time three, and time four. Thus the data was correlated as follows:

Subject	Data Correlated
S1	T1 x T3
S2	T1 x T3
S3	T1 x T2
S4	T1 x T4
S5	T1 x T2
S6	T1 x T3
S7	T1 x T4
S8	T1 x T3
S9	T1 x T2
S10	T1 x T4
S11	T1 x T4
S12	T1 x T2

Using Spearman Rank Order Correlation the coefficient obtained was as follows

$$R_s = 0.76 \quad N = 12$$

It should be noted that the correlation coefficient may be affected by the fact that some objective data may have in actuality changed over the period of one year. Thus the coefficient may not give a wholly accurate picture of the reliability of the schedule or the technique of administration. In these circumstances, however it would appear to represent a satisfactorily high degree of correlation

#### 6.6.2 Task Variables

All interviews were carried out in the respondents home at a time convenient to them. The interviews were invariably carried out with no other person in the room aside from the interviewer and the respondent, and the respondent was assured several times in the course of the introduction and during the interview that anything she said would be treated with absolute confidentiality. Thus the intent was to allow the respondent to be as at ease and as reassured as possible. In addition, after the respondent had the purpose of the study explained to her and was told the type of questions which would be asked, she was asked to sign a sheet stating that she understood the purpose of the interview and

agreed to take part in the study. This latter strategy was pioneered by Cannel et al (1963) and was based on the work of Lewin, who found that those people who make a public commitment to do something are more likely to carry it out than those who have not made such a public commitment. Cannel's findings suggest that this strategy produced more precise and more complete data, and also encouraged the reporting of potentially embarrassing information.

In terms of the structure of the schedule, one of the main virtues of the semi structured format is its flexibility. The experienced interviewer can for example phrase potentially sensitive questions so that they are less threatening, or more salient to the individual. Although the schedule has an ordering of questions, the researcher experienced in its use can use judgement in deciding when to introduce certain items and more importantly when to refrain from asking a particular question. By the use of prompts and asking supplementary questions, the experienced user can often obtain data which would be lost to a more structured technique.

#### 6.7 Items In The Interview Schedule

The interview schedule (see appendix) contained items which can be subsumed under eight headings.

- i) Demographic
- ii) Material
- iii) Children
- iv) Social Support
- v) Relationship With Spouse
- vi) Emotional Aspects
- vii) Physical and Psychological Health
- viii) Use Of Welfare Agencies

Within each heading are items concerning the objective event, the subjective experience of it, anxiety, and perceived control over the event.

## 6.8 CODING AND ANALYSIS

### 6.8.1 Coding

The data collected in the interviews were coded into nominal and ordinal scales in the following manner:

i) All the interview schedules were examined and categories of answer formulated for each item

ii) These categories were incorporated into a coding frame which was used to code each individual subject's interview schedule.

iii) Because the range of categories was fairly wide, often with as many as nine categories per item, the data was further reduced by dichotomising the categories in each of the items apart from the quantitative ones.

Thus the data was available in a hierarchical form as follows;

- a) Raw Data to be used for illustrative material
- b) Categorised data to be used to flesh out the third category
- c) Dichotomised variables for use in quantitative analysis

#### 6.8.2 Analysis Of Data

All data was analysed using SPSSX on a prime mainframe computer. Due to the nature of the data, non - parametric statistical tests

were used for most of the analysis, except where suitably robust parametric tests were adjudged to be more appropriate.

#### 6.8.3 Construction Of Rating Scales

In order to obtain a number of independent variables which reflected the theoretical orientation of the study, composite rating scales were constructed by the following method;

i) The whole data set was reduced by principal components analysis.

ii) The initial factor loadings were examined and those variables which composed the factors with an eigenvalue greater than one were extracted and subjected to a further principal components analysis

iii) A terminal solution was obtained by varimax rotation

iv) Seven factors were extracted which accounted for 75% of the variance. These factors were seen to represent the following dimensions:

i) Generalised Expressed Anxiety

ii) Woman's Coping strategy, (internal Vs external)



- iii) Perceived Control
- iv) Man's Previous Imprisonment History
- v) Woman's Attitude Towards Visits
- vi) Aspects Of Relationship With Husband
- vii) Perceived Effect On Children

iv) Composite indices were constructed which represented the dimensions associated with the rotated factors. These indices were calculated for each case by multiplying a given factor score coefficient by the vector of standardised values of the variables which comprised that factor. This procedure produced standardised composite variables with a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. (This procedure is outlined by Kim (1975) and discussed in more detail by Kaiser (1962))

#### 6.9 LONGITUDINAL SUB - SAMPLE

In order to attempt to identify any process of change over time within the sample, a sub - sample of twelve respondents was selected to be studied longitudinally. this subsample were interviewed at first contact and a further three times over the year following first contact. The procedure was as follows:

The subsample was selected from cell seven. That is long term beginning sentence. This was to ensure that no subject in the longitudinal subsample would have her partner released within the year of the study. The respondents were selected in the following manner: All respondents whose spouse had been in prison for more than twelve months were excluded from selection. This was done in order to ensure that all respondents in the longitudinal sub - sample were within twelve months of the initial experience of spouse imprisonment. The sub - sample was composed of twelve subjects. Every respondent who fit the criteria of being in cell seven, and having a spouse who had been in prison for less than twelve months was asked if she would be willing to participate in further interviews. The first twelve who were asked, agreed to do so.

At first contact, on completion of the interview the subject was asked if the interviewer might visit again in four months time, to find out how she was fairing. If the woman agreed, a date was set there and then, and as soon as possible after the interview, the researcher wrote to the subject, thanking her and reminding her of the next appointment. Three weeks before the next appointment, the researcher wrote to the woman reminding her again of the appointment, and as at first contact, enclosing a postcard which the woman could return if she did not wish to be interviewed. If the woman did not return the postcard, the

researcher visited her home as arranged. The same procedure was used for times three and four.

On each occasion the same interview schedule was used as in time one. The only changes were in some of the phrasing in view of the fact that the interviewer and the subject knew one another, and questions were being asked about a period between two interviews.

The data were coded and scales constructed in the same manner as outlined earlier in this chapter.

#### Attrition Rate

The attrition rate of the subsample was as follows;

Time 1:	N = 12	100%
Time 2:	N = 12	100%
Time 3:	N = 8	67%
Time 4	N = 7	58%

It can be seen then that by the fourth interview just over forty per cent of the sub-sample had dropped out of the study. Since the major reason for subject attrition was that they were no longer contactable at their last known address, it was impossible to follow up to determine whether the drop - out's circumstances had changed in the intervening period in any significantly different way from the remainder. The implications of this situation will be discussed in Chapter Twelve.

PART IV  
RESULTS

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE WHOLE SAMPLE

#### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, descriptive statistics relating to the data from the study will be outlined and examined. Data will be displayed in a crosstabular form, broken down primarily by stage of sentence. Where necessary and appropriate, data will also be broken down by sentence length, and data from within each sentence length band will be tabulated. Statistical independence of variables will be tested using chi square, and the conventionally accepted probability level of 0.05 will be accepted as significant. A note of caution should be sounded regarding small numbers in some of the crosstabs tables. This is particularly pertinent when some of the data from, for example, particular sentence length sub - groups are being considered. In these cases, the possibility exists that expected frequencies of less than five will occur in some of the cells of the tables, making the resultant chi square values more or less suspect.

## 7.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

### 7.1.1 Male Partners Prison History

The sample consisted of 123 women whose male marital partners were at the time of the interview serving a sentence of imprisonment in a Scottish prison. The range of sentences being served by the male partner was nine months to life imprisonment.

Mean = 52 months; S.D = 46 months

The amount of time already served by the male partners ranged from one month to 11 years (133 months).

Mean = 23 months; S.D = 28 months

In terms of the offence for which the man was convicted, these were as follows:

TABLE 7.1 CATEGORIES OF OFFENCES FOR WHICH MALE PARTNER SENTENCED

Category	N
Offences Against The Person	62
Offences against Property	18
Assault And Robbery	18
Firearms, Explosives and Terrorist	6
Other	19
TOTAL	123

the majority of the male partners had no previous history of imprisonment since the marriage, and of those who had, the mean number of periods of imprisonment was 2.5, with a range of 1 - 6. The mean length of each male partners previous prison sentences was calculated producing a range of 1 month to 84 months, (mean = 16 months).

#### 7.1.2 Age

The age range of the female respondents was 18 years to 52 years (Mean = 30.2).

The mean age for the woman was slightly lower than that for the men, ( Mean = 32).

#### 7.1.3 History Of The Relationship

Twenty six per cent of the sample were cohabiting and 74% had been legally married. The lengths of the relationships varied from less than one year to more than twenty years, with the modal period being between five and ten years.

#### 7.1.4 Children

Within the sample as a whole, the number of children the couple had ranged from one to eight, (mean = 2.1).

### 7.2 FINANCIAL SITUATION

It would appear the within the sample as a whole, spouse imprisonment engenders some degree of financial difficulty for



the majority. As table 7.2 shows, overall, 65% of the sample reported financial difficulties, and these difficulties did not seem to diminish as time progressed.

TABLE 7.2 FREQUENCY OF REPORTED FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL(n)
YES	N=30 (68%)	N=32 (76%)	N=18 (63%)	80
NO	N=22 (42%)	N=10 (24%)	N=11 (37%)	43
TOTAL	N=52 (100%)	N=42 (100%)	N=29 (100%)	123

Nor indeed did the length of sentence seem to have any effect upon the reported incidence of financial difficulties. Even in the longest sentences, the reported incidence of problems late on in the sentence might indicate that there did not appear to be any systematic adaptation to financial hardship taking place

TABLE 7.3 PROPORTIONS OF RESPONDENTS IN SAMPLING CELLS REPORTING FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL(n)
SHORT	81% (n=9)	81% (n=9)	55% (n=6)	24
LONG	65 (n=15)	75% (n=15)	80% (n=8)	38
TOTAL(n)	24	24	14	62

It may be however that the population of prisoners and their families would tend to be among the more financially marginal in the general population in any event, and thus, absolute measures

of financial hardship might be somewhat independent of the husbands absence. In addition to this the level of benefit available to a woman in these circumstances may make the objective reality of the situation such that any perceived change in financial circumstances is unlikely.

Despite the many contraindicatory factors which would be likely to militate against women in such circumstances being able to take employment, (e.g particularly high societal unemployment at the time of interview, responsibility for young children, lack of skills etc), A number of women attempted to address their financial situation by securing employment. It can be seen from table 7.4, that among those women whose husbands are at the beginning of the sentence, few reported having paid employment, (20%), Within the mid stage group however, 33% were working and within the end stage group, the proportion was 50%. This pattern of frequencies was statistically significant. The impression given by the data in table 7.3 that the women were more likely to secure employment in the later stages of the husband's absence is complemented by table 7.5. Here it may be seen that within the short term group the proportion working at the end of the sentence was about twice that of the beginning of the sentence. However, this final proportion approximated only to about that which obtained at the mid stages of medium term sentences, and was less than that of the mid stages of the long term group. Thus it may be that the adoption of such a strategy

may take place after a definite time and may be less related to the relative time the husband has been absent.

TABLE 7.4 FREQUENCIES OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE SECURED EMPLOYMENT SINCE HUSBAND'S IMPRISONMENT BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
YES	10 (20%)	14 (33%)	14 (50%)	38 (31%)
NO	42 (80%)	28 (67%)	15 (50%)	85 (69%)
TOTAL	52 (100)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	123 100%

CHI SQUARE = 7.53; DF = 2; p<0.05

TABLE 7.5 PROPORTIONS OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE SECURED EMPLOYMENT BY LENGTH AND STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL (n)
SHORT	17% (n=2)	33% (n=3)	33% (n=4)	9
MEDIUM	25% (n=4)	33% (n=3)	50% (n=4)	11
LONG	17% (n=4)	40% (n=8)	60% (n=6)	18
TOTAL(n)	10	14	14	38

Whether or not securing employment improved the individual's financial situation, it should be noted that for two thirds of the population, this was not a strategy being used, and that for 60% of the sample, their financial situation was to them, problematic.

It does seem however that as the male partner's sentence progresses the female partner's anxiety about the family's

financial state seems to subside. Tables 7.6 and 7.7 that both in absolute terms and in terms of degree the anxiety reported by women in the sample decreased.

TABLE 7.6 FREQUENCY OF REPORTED ANXIETY ABOUT FINANCES BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL(n)
ANXIOUS	43 (83%)	23 (52%)	11 (35%)	77
NOT ANXIOUS	9 (17%)	19 (48%)	18 (65%)	46
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	123

CHI SQUARE = 17.6; D.F = 2;  $p < 0.01$

TABLE 7.7 REPORTED DEGREE OF ANXIETY BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL(n)
NOT/SLIGHTLY	11 (20%)	26 (60%)	23 (80%)	60
MODERATELY	16 (30%)	13 (33%)	6 (20%)	35
VERY	25 (50%)	3 (7%)	0 (0%)	28
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	123

CHI SQUARE = 42.3; D.F = 4;  $p < 0.001$

The highly significant level of statistical dependence shown by these patterns of frequencies would suggest then that there may be a pattern in which the presence and degree of anxiety is negatively related to the stage of the sentence. The fact that the same pattern was exhibited within each of the sentence length groups and the fact that little difference in the pattern of

frequencies was found between sentence length groups would suggest that it is the stage of the sentence rather than the length of time the male partner has been in prison which is the important factor.

In an attempt to ascertain the objective basis for this anxiety, data relating to specific financial problems encountered during the husband's imprisonment is tabulated in table 7.8. From this table it can be seen that 66% of the sample had experienced one or more specific problems relating to finance which had caused them to worry. As would be expected, given the findings relating to anxiety, those respondents in the beginning of sentence group were much more likely to report one or more specific incidents than either the mid stage group or the end stage group. There was no significant difference in terms of sentence length.

TABLE 7.8 SPECIFIC FINANCIAL WORRIES REPORTED BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
NO EPISODES	9 (17%)	17 (40%)	16 (55%)	42 (34)
1 EPISODE	26 (50%)	15 (36%)	7 (24%)	48 (39)
2+ EPISODES	17 (33%)	10 (24%)	6 (21%)	33 (27)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	123 (100)

CHI SQUARE = 13.15; D.F = 4;  $p < 0.05$

It would appear then that the respondents in the sample experience a high degree of anxiety in relation to their financial situation, and that this seems to be negatively related to the stage of the male partner's sentence rather than the actual time the male partner has been absent

In an attempt to identify the ways in which the respondents coped with financial hardships, the data was tabulated in terms of whether the respondent used external sources of help, (e.g, friends, family, agencies, credit etc), or whether they reported utilising internal resources, (e.g, Budgeting, 'Make sure the kids have got what they need', Going to Oxfam, Jumble sales, etc). It would appear that while 95% of the respondents reported using some form of coping strategy, the sample was fairly evenly split in terms of internal Vs external methods.

TABLE 7.9 'LOCUS' OF COPING STRATEGIES BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
INTERNAL	24 (50%)	20 (50%)	13 (40%)	57 (46)
EXTERNAL	25 (50%)	20 (50%)	16 (60%)	61 (50)
BOTH	14 (28%)	15 (38%)	8 (28%)	47 (38)
TOTAL	49	40	29	165

Missing Observations (i.e 'Dont Cope' = 5)

Totals sum to more than 123 because some respondents provided more than one answer

This pattern of frequencies might suggest that the method by which the respondent copes with financial hardship is often maintained over time, and this is supported by the fact that the same homogeneity was found across sentence lengths and within each sentence length group between stages.

Respondents were finally asked about how much in control they felt of their financial situation. Again it would appear that for the whole sample, those in the beginning of sentence group feel much less in control than do those in the mid stage group and those in the end stage group.

TABLE 7.10 REPORTED DEGREE OF CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL SITUATION BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END
NONE/SLIGHT	23 (44%)	11 (26%)	7 (24%)
MODERATE	26 (50%)	27 (64%)	17 (59%)
VERY	3 (6%)	4 (9%)	5 (17%)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)

CHI SQUARE = 15.00; D.F = 4; P = 0.05

#### 7.2.1 Summary

It would appear then that those women whose husbands are imprisoned to a large extent experience financial difficulties when their partner is imprisoned. It would also seem, however, that whether the financial change is as dramatic as might be

expected or not, the majority of the sample experience a degree of anxiety as a result. this anxiety appears to be negatively related to how much of the sentence has been completed, irrespective of the length of sentence, and thus the actual length of time the man has been absent may in fact be less important.. At the same time, it may be that certain coping strategies in fact take a certain amount of time to adopt. It does appear too that although much has been made of the respondent's perception of the situation, most respondents were able to recount one or more specific concrete examples of financially stressful episodes. Despite too the expressed anxiety, most respondents felt moderately in control of their financial situation while a sizeable minority, particularly at the start of the sentence felt that they had little or no control over their finances.

### 7.3 CHILDREN

#### 7.3.1 Telling The Children

The respondents were asked if they had told the children about the father's imprisonment. Table 7.11 shows that for the whole sample respondents at the beginning of the sentence were much more likely to attempt to conceal the situation from the child. Such attempts seemed to gradually reduce in frequency across the



stages of the sentence until in the final stages of the sentence about three quarters of respondents had told the children the situation.

TABLE 7.11 DID RESPONDENT TELL CHILD OF FATHER'S IMPRISONMENT BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
YES	17 (37%)	19 (53%)	22 (76%)	58 (47)
NO	28 (62%)	17 (47%)	7 (24%)	52 (52)
TOTAL	45 (100%)	36 (100%)	29 (100%)	110 (100)

CHI SQUARE = 15.36; D.F = 2;  $p < 0.01$

(Missing observations = 13)

Even at an intuitive level it would seem that such a strategy could only be maintained for a certain length of time before it became impractical, particularly for those in the long term group. The maturation of the child over a long period, the long term absence of the father, the visits to the prison would all seem to militate against maintaining the fiction.. Indeed it is shown in table 7.12 that among the long term group, by the mid stage of the sentence, 75% of respondents had told the children, and by the final third of the sentence, all the children had been told. In the short term group however, the picture was much less clear, with similar proportions telling and failing to tell the children of the situation.

TABLE 7.12 PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS TELLING CHILD OF FATHER'S IMPRISONMENT BY STAGE OF SENTENCE: COMPARISON OF LONG TERM GROUP WITH SHORT TERM GROUP

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL(n)
SHORT TERM	45% (n=5)	43% (n=3)	45% (n=6)	14
LONG TERM	55% (n=7)	74% (n=14)	100% (n=10)	31

Thus it may be that the shorter period of partner's absence makes concealing the truth from the children a more feasible strategy. The similar proportions who initiate this strategy at the beginning of the sentence, it would suggest however that within the long term group this strategy is attempted perhaps without considering the way in which it is going to be maintained in the future. This eventually may turn out to be a further source of stress, until the truth finally does come out.

Further to the above finding, the respondents were asked if the child had heard anything about the fathers situation from outside the home. For the whole sample, just under one quarter, (24%, n=29), reported that one or more of their children had heard comments about their father outside the home. Although this figure might be seen to be quite high, it should be noted that for the majority of those who responded in the affirmative, the information from outside of the home emanated from within the extended family, and it was often the case that the child had heard adults speaking about the father's predicament. Thus while

there may be a small number of cases where this item indicates malice towards or stigmatisation of the family, there was only one case where stigmatisation of the family was manifest in overt victimisation of the child. In this case an Asian woman had married a white man and was living in a small community. The man was subsequently sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, and the woman who had been alienated from her family as a result of her marriage was left isolated in this small town, with a nine month old daughter. On one occasion, while shopping in the town she was approached by a local man who was drunk. He bent down, spat on the child who was in a pram, and said 'Your father is a murderer, you black bastard'. This case is of note for two reasons; firstly because of the extreme form of stigmatisation and the victimisation of the child as well as the mother, and secondly because it is difficult to separate out the undoubted racist component from the situation of stigmatising the family because of the husband's imprisonment.

#### 7.3.2 Children's Behaviour

There was an overall tendency among respondents, particularly in the early stages of the sentence to perceive the child's behaviour as having deteriorated in the period since the husband's imprisonment, with only a very small minority stating that there had been an improvement in the child's behaviour. Again as Table 7.13 shows, the frequency of such reports decreased in the middle stage group and this change was

maintained into the final stage group. It should be noted too, that the frequency of reports of no change in the child's behaviour reached the same level as the negative reports, and was maintained in the later stage group. The reports of deterioration in behaviour may be because of an initial negative reaction on the child's part to the father's departure, or indeed it may be linked more to the women's fears or expectations leading to hypervigilance on her part, and the attribution of normal childish misbehaviour to the male partner's imprisonment. Perhaps more likely is some form of interaction between the two. While the child may very well react to the absence of the father, she or he could equally be reacting also to the mother's reaction to the event, and the woman's anxiety may in turn be heightened by the child's reaction.

TABLE 7.13 REPORTS OF CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
+ve CHANGE	1 (2%)	6 (14%)	5 (17%)	12 (10)
-ve CHANGE	39 (75%)	18 (43%)	12 (41%)	69 (56)
NO CHANGE	12 (23%)	18 (43%)	12 (41%)	42 (34)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	123 (100)

CHI SQUARE = 14.8; D.F = 4; p < 0.01

In order to put some objective flesh on the above subjective report, the respondents were asked if there had been any reports regarding problems with the children from outside the home. These included reports from other members of the family, neighbours and friends, nursery and school as well as police, social work etc. Table 7.14 shows that again there was a statistically significant positive relationship between the stage of sentence and the frequency of such reports.

TABLE 7.14 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE THE HOME REGARDING CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
YES	36 (69%)	15 (36%)	8 (27%)	59 (48)
NO	16 (31%)	27 (63%)	21 (73%)	64 (52)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	123 (100)

CHI SQUARE = 16.8; D.F = 2;  $p < 0.001$

The frequency of such reports was not related to any particular sentence length, similar patterns of frequencies being reported from all sentence bands, (i.e approximately 50% answering in the affirmative and 50% answering in the negative). It was apparent however that when each sentence band was broken down into stages that the most dramatic change in the reported frequency of negative feedback from outside the family was that found between the stages of long term sentences. Here it was found that 83% of the beginning of sentence group reported some

negative feedback from outside the family, while 70% of the end of sentence group reported no such negative feedback. this association between stage of sentence and reported frequency was again significant at the 0.001 level. Thus it may be that that any behavioural problems shown by the child as a result of the father's imprisonment are for the most part, extinguished by the end of the sentence, and particularly by the end of a long sentence. This may be a result of maturation within the child, adaptation to the fathers absence, or both. Equally it may be that the mother's vigilance in respect of negative feedback is reduced in the sense that what was construed as complaints about the child's behaviour at the beginning of the sentence may as a result of reduced anxiety about the child and also about what the outside world thinks of her situation, not be so construed now.

### 7.3.3 Children's Health

Slightly more than one quarter of the whole sample reported that one or more of their children was suffering from some health problem as a result of the father's imprisonment at the time of the interview. Table 7.15 indicates again that those women at the start of the sentence are more likely to report that the children have health problems. Thus 40% of the respondents in the beginning group reported health problems among their children, and this proportion reduced to 24% in the middle stage group and 14% in the end stage group.

TABLE 7.15 FREQUENCY OF REPORTED HEALTH PROBLEMS IN CHILDREN BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
HEALTH PROBLEMS	21 (40%)	10 (24%)	4 (14%)	35 (28)
NO PROBLEMS	31 (60%)	32 (76%)	25 (86%)	88 (72)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	25 (86%)	123 (100)

CHI SQUARE = 7.14; D.F = 2; p < 0.05

When individual sentence bands are broken down by stage, however, a familiar pattern appears. In the long term group, reports of child ill health reduce from 52% in the beginning group to 10% in the end group. Within the short term group however, the reduction is much smaller; from 33% in the beginning to 28% at the end.

These findings would suggest that while the stage of sentence is negatively related to the frequency with which child ill health is reported, it does appear that the actual chronological distance from the husbands imprisonment is perhaps a more important factor in the equation than the actual stage of the sentence, (i.e the time spent in prison relative to the time still to spend in prison.). Also, while the frequency of reported child ill health decreases, it is not possible without more objective data to determine whether actual ill health decreases. That is, while any physical consequences for the child of the father's absence may decrease as the child adapts to

the situation, it is equally likely that with a decrease in anxiety over time the mother will become less sensitive to the possibility of health problems in the child being a consequence of the father's imprisonment.

#### 7.3.4 Children's Contact With The Father

The respondents were asked if the child spoke about the father and what was the general sentiment expressed. as can be seen from table 7.16, a large majority, (76%), spoke positively about their father, while about one in five children were reported to speak negatively about him. It can be seen that the proportions speaking positively and negatively were almost identical over the three stage bands. An interesting phenomenon albeit non statistically significant was the fact that the proportion of respondents in the end group reporting that the children did not speak about the father was about twice that of the other two groups.

TABLE 7.16 DO THE CHILDREN SPEAK ABOUT THEIR FATHER BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
YES +VE	10 (19%)	8 (19%)	6 (21%)	24 (19)
YES -VE	39 (75%)	32 (76%)	20 (70%)	91 (74)
NO	3 (6%)	2 (5%)	3 (10%)	8 (7)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	123 (100)



The respondents were asked if the child was taken to visit the man in prison. It can be seen that the most common category of response was infrequently or irregularly, with 58% giving these responses.

TABLE 7.17 FREQUENCY OF CHILD'S VISITS TO FATHER BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
FREQUENTLY/ REGULARLY	16 (31%)	12 (29%)	11 (38%)	39 (32)
INFREQUENTLY/ IRREGULARLY	31 (60%)	25 (59%)	15 (52%)	71 (58)
NEVER	4 (8%)	5 (12%)	3 (10%)	12 (10)
TOTAL	51 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	122 (100)

(Missing Observations = 1)

The differences in visiting frequencies between sentence stages were only very marginal, and there were no significant differences between sentence lengths. It is interesting to note that the frequencies observed in the above table are almost exactly reversed when the woman is asked how often she visits the husband. In that case the frequency of the response 'frequently/regularly' is about twice the frequency of the response 'infrequently/irregularly'. One possible reason for this may be that the woman attends all visits and only brings the child on infrequent occasions. It was commonly reported for

instance, that major problems for the wife at visits were having to travel to the prison on public transport with children, having to entertain children at the visits, children being upset at visits, and the husband resenting the attention which the children demanded during what was a short period of contact between husband and wife. Thus it may be that the good of the relationship between husband and wife takes precedence over the father and child maintaining maximum contact. Another interesting phenomenon however is that while the frequency of visiting by the wife often decreases as the sentence progresses, particularly in long sentences, (see Table 7.33), the same decrease does not seem to occur in the frequency of visits by the children. It may be then that even in those cases where the relationship between the wife and her husband becomes more distant during the sentence, some effort is made to maintain the relationship between the father and the child.

#### 7.3.5 Other Anxieties About The Child

Among the whole sample, 61% expressed anxieties about the effect of the husband's imprisonment upon the children. These anxieties were many and varied, including the future relationship the child would have with the father, future delinquency as result of the father's imprisonment, the child's school performance, disruption of the relationship between mother and son on husband's release. It can be seen from table 7.18, that in the beginning stages of the husband's sentence, the frequency of reported anxiety is

about twice that which obtains at the end stages of a sentence. Thus almost three quarters of respondents at the beginning of a sentence have anxieties to some degree about the effect of the husband's imprisonment on the child, reducing to two thirds at the mid-stages and finally just over one third at the end.

TABLE 7.18 FREQUENCY OF REPORTED ANXIETIES ABOUT CHILDREN BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
ANXIOUS	38 (73%)	26 (61%)	11 (37%)	75 (61)
NOT ANXIOUS	14 (27%)	16 (39%)	18 (63%)	48 (39)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	123 (100)

CHI SQUARE = 9.69; D.F = 2; p < 0.01

Further to this it would appear that in the long term sentences, anxiety about the children decays most dramatically between the beginning and the end of the sentence. Table 7.19 shows that the 80% in this group reporting anxiety at the beginning of the sentence reduces to only 30% at the end. This is strikingly different from the pattern of frequencies between the stage sub - groups in the short sentence group. Within this group there was only a marginal difference between the stages, although the starting point was much lower.

TABLE 7.19 PROPORTIONS REPORTING ANXIETY ABOUT CHILDREN BY STAGE OF SENTENCE: COMPARISON OF SHORT TERM GROUP WITH LONG TERM GROUP

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END
LONG SENTENCE	82% (n=19)	55% (n=11)	30% (n=3)
SHORT SENTENCE	58% (n=7)	55% (n=6)	45% (n=5)

This may suggest that while the husband being sentenced to a long period of imprisonment engenders more anxiety than a short sentence, the length of time between the beginning and the end of short sentences does not seem sufficient to allow the woman to accommodate this anxiety. It may well be that particularly in very long sentences, the child has matured and the mother recognises that objectively there has been little detrimental effect upon the child. It is also likely that if adaptation occurs then it will occur over the course of a long sentence on the part of both the child and the mother.

The proposition that respondents in the short term group do not have time to adapt over the period of the sentence, is further fleshed out by examining the self reported degree of anxiety experienced. It can be seen from table 7.20 that 73% of the whole sample reported themselves to be 'moderately' or 'very' anxious at the start of the sentence and that the proportion reporting a moderate degree of anxiety at the end had reduced to 38%, with no respondent reporting herself to be 'very' anxious.

TABLE 7.20 REPORTED LEVEL OF ANXIETY BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
NOT / SLIGHT	15 (28%)	24 (57%)	21 (72%)	60 (49)
MODERATE	33 (63%)	17 (40%)	8 (38%)	58 (47)
VERY	4 (10%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	5 (4)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	123 (100)

CHI SQUARE = 26.5; D.F = 4;  $p < 0.001$

Within the short term group there were only marginal differences between the stages of sentence in the pattern of frequency distributions, while in the long term group, the proportion of those who reported being not or slightly anxious rose from 28% in the beginning, through 57% in the middle, to 72% in the end.

#### 7.3.6 Summary

It appears that a majority of the respondents initially attempt to hide the fact of the husband's imprisonment from the child, but that eventually all tell the child. only a minority of the children were reported to have heard the truth from someone outside the home. The fact of the father's absence through imprisonment is perceived by respondents to be the source of numerous problems for the children particularly in the early stages of the sentence. This perception is corroborated to some extent by the respondent's ability to cite concrete examples of children's behavioural problems and of negative feedback about the children from outside the home. In a minority of cases

children are perceived to suffer health consequences as a result of husband's imprisonment, and a small minority perceive their children as being stigmatised by the event. A large amount of anxiety is expressed by the respondents about the possible negative effects on the child resulting from the fathers absence, particularly at the start of a sentence, and it appears that there is an inverse relationship between the amount of anxiety and the chronological distance from the start of the sentence. It appears that in shorter sentences the frequency of expressed anxiety and problems may reduce only marginally or not at all as the sentence progresses, and that even in those cases where there is a decrease, it is invariably very much smaller than that which occurs over a long sentence. It would appear that, although the children are taken to visit the father less frequently than the mother visits, there are attempts made to maintain contact between the father and the child even in those cases where the contact between the husband and wife is diminishing, or has ceased.

#### 7.4 SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS.

##### 7.4.1 Family Relationships

A large majority of respondents had a positive relationship with their own family at the time of the interview, with 77% of the whole sample stating that they had a good relationship and 22%

stating that they had a bad relationship. One person had no natal family.

TABLE 7.21 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESPONDENT AND HER OWN FAMILY BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
POSITIVE	36 (69%)	36 (86%)	23 (79%)	95 (77)
NEGATIVE	16 (31%)	5 (14%)	6 (21%)	27 (22)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	41 (100%)	29 (100%)	122 (100)

(Missing Observations = 1)

It can be seen that there were no particular pattern of differences between stage categories, and in fact there was no significant difference in terms of length of sentence. It can be seen from table 7.22 that in a sizeable minority of cases, the relationship with the respondents natal family changed for the worse as a result of the husband's imprisonment. This is not to say however, that the relationship deteriorated to the point of estrangement, much more common being the scenario of the family expressing negative sentiments about the man and the wife resenting it, causing friction between her and her family. Similarly there was a small group of respondents, (n=7), who had a good relationship with their family, but whose family were estranged from the male partner. It would seem that in this situation any friction between the wife's family and herself

through her husband was being being effectively postponed until the husband came back on the scene.

TABLE 7.22 NEGATIVE CHANGE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH FAMILY BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
YES	14 (27%)	14 (33%)	9 (31%)	37 (30)
NO	38 (73%)	27 (66%)	20 (69%)	85 (69)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	41 (100%)	29 (100%)	122 (100)

(Missing Observations = 1)

In terms of the wife's relationship with the husband's family, much the same situation seems to obtain, with 74% of the sample reporting a positive relationship with their in - laws. This pattern was maintained across all sentence stages and all sentence lengths, and there was much the same rate of change in the relationship as a result of the husband's imprisonment.

It can be seen from table 7.23 that respondents felt that they would be more likely to receive help from their own families than from their in - laws. As the sentence progressed, the numbers who would approach either their own or their husband's family for help reduced, until at the end, 54% would approach their own family and 44% would approach their in - laws.



TABLE 7.22 SOURCES OF HELP FROM WITHIN THE FAMILY BY STAGE OF SENTENCE.

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL(n)
OWN FAMILY	70% (n=35)	58% (n=30)	54% (n=28)	93
IN - LAWS	52% (n=27)	44% (n=23)	44% (n=23)	73
TOTAL	n=62	n=53	n=51	166

(Totals greater than 123 because some respondents gave more than one answer)

Thus both families would seem to be a potentially valuable source of help and support for the wife, particularly at the start of the husband's sentence when the situation would seem to be worst and the wife is certainly at her most anxious.

#### 7.4.2 Relationships With Others In The Community

It was thought that apart from family, having close friendships might provide some source of help or support during the husband's imprisonment. It can be seen from table 7.23 that the vast majority of respondents reported having one or more close friends, and that these friendships apart from a slight decay in the frequencies seem to be maintained throughout the sentence.

TABLE 7.23 CLOSE FRIENDSHIPS BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
NO FRIENDS	4 (8%)	6 (14%)	6 (21%)	16 (13)
ONE OR MORE FRIENDS	48 (92%)	36 (86%)	23 (79%)	107 (87)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	123 (100)

It would seem to be the case that these friendships are in the main maintained even over the longest sentences. Among the long sentence group 70% of respondents in the end stage sub group report having close friendships.

Thus it would not seem to be the case that women in this sample have withdrawn from social relationships as a result of their husband's imprisonment. At least where family and close friends are concerned the relationship seems to be maintained, across all sentence lengths and throughout the course of the sentence. The fidelity of friends is reinforced by the findings reported in table 7.24. It can be seen that only 6% of respondents noticed a negative change in the attitude of friends, while 25% found their friends to be more positive in their relationship as a result of the husband's imprisonment. For the most part, however, respondents did not perceive any change in the relationship with their friends as a result of the husband's imprisonment.

TABLE 7.24 CHANGE IN FRIEND'S ATTITUDE BY STAGE OF SENTENCE.

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
-VE CHANGE	2 (4%)	1 (5%)	3 (11%)	6 (5)
NO CHANGE	33 (63%)	33 (79%)	20 (69%)	86 (70)
+VE CHANGE	17 (34%)	8 (19%)	6 (21%)	31 (25)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	123 (100)

In spite of the fact that friendships are maintained, and friends seem to be particularly positive in the early stages of the husband's sentence, it would appear that only about one in seven of the respondents saw friends as potential sources of help and support. Table 7.25 shows that at the beginning of the sentence 17% saw friends as a source of help, and that this proportion had reduced to 7% in the end of sentence group.

TABLE 7.25 FRIENDS AS A SOURCE OF HELP BY STAGE OF SENTENCE.

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
YES	9 (17%)	7 (17%)	2 (7%)	18 (15)
NO	43 (83%)	35 (83%)	27 (93%)	105 (85)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	123 (100)

These findings seem to be independent of sentence length.

Essentially, then, there was little difference between the proportions of family, in - laws, and friends who reacted positively or negatively to the wife after the husband's imprisonment. In terms of neighbours reactions, however there

does appear to be a slight tendency towards an initial perception of neighbours being less positive towards the family than either family or friends, although this is slight and is not statistically significant. This phenomenon may be understood perhaps in that while families may be perceived and may perceive themselves to have some sort of duty towards a member and may also have a lot invested in family relationships, and while friends are chosen, who one has as a neighbour is largely fortuitous. Thus it is not surprising to find that some may not be supportive in adversity, particularly if such adversity is subject to social stigma.

Table 7.26, then, indicates that while half as many neighbours as friends reacted in a positive manner, twice as many were reported to react in a negative manner.

TABLE 7.26 NEIGHBOURS REACTION BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
+VE REACTION	4 (8%)	4 (10%)	7 (24%)	15 (12)
NO REACTION	41 (79%)	35 (83%)	20 (70%)	96 (78)
-VE REACTION	7 (13%)	3 (7%)	2 (7%)	12 (10)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	123 (100)

One noteworthy feature is that by the end of the sentence, the proportion of respondents perceiving their neighbour's reaction to them as positive, is three times that of the beginning of the sentence. It does seem to be recognised by the respondents,

however, that the vast majority of neighbours did not react in any particular way to the husband's imprisonment. However, in spite of this it is noteworthy that the fears regarding the stigma attached to the situation was not allayed for the majority of respondents. Table 7.27 shows that perceived stigma was a factor for the majority of respondents across all stages of sentence.

TABLE 7.27 ANXIETY ABOUT STIGMA BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
YES	35 (67%)	23 (55%)	11 (61%)	69 (56)
NO	17 (33%)	19 (45%)	18 (39%)	54 (44)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	123 (100)

This pattern of frequencies was subject to only marginal differences across sentence lengths.

This anxiety then may be more reflective of an abstract idea of what is 'acceptable', than based upon actual experience. The anxiety too would not seem to be affected by the seriousness of the offence, ( if seriousness is reflected in the length of sentence), nor by adaptation or coping strategies (if these develop over time).

As would be expected given the above findings, few respondents saw neighbours as a source of help or support. The vast majority

(88%) of the sample stated that they would not approach neighbours for help, this finding being in keeping with attitudes expressed regarding other forms of informal support outwith the family.

#### 7.4.3 Summary

It would appear that respondents in the sample maintained positive relationships with both their own and their husband's family, despite some infrequent friction. The family, particularly the wife's own family, were seen as a source of help and support particularly in the early stages of the sentence. Most respondents had and maintained one or more close friendships throughout the sentence, and although it was recognised that friends were likely to not react at all, or to react positively to the husband's imprisonment, in the early stages of the sentence, they were not seen generally as a source of help and support. Others in the community epitomised by neighbours were generally seen as being indifferent to the family's situation, and were not seen as potential sources of help. The majority of respondents expressed anxiety about the stigma attached to the husband's imprisonment, despite their implicit recognition of societal indifference. This anxiety was independent of sentence length or sentence stage.

## 7.5 EFFECTS OF HUSBAND'S IMPRISONMENT ON WIFE'S SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

### 7.5.1 Social Life And Social Anxiety

As would be expected, it seems that for the majority of the respondents, their social life had deteriorated initially. This deterioration was manifest in going out less, having fewer people coming to the house, not having money to engage in activities which they used to engage in, avoiding places they previously visited regularly because of perceived stigma, and drinking alone at home, rather than in company. Table 7.28 shows that overall, social life had deteriorated for 80% of the sample. However it appears that as time progresses, a smaller proportion see their social life as having deteriorated and more see it as having not changed or indeed as having improved.

TABLE 7.28 CHANGE IN SOCIAL LIFE AS A RESULT OF HUSBAND'S IMPRISONMENT BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
-VE CHANGE	47 (90%)	32 (76%)	19 (65%)	98 (80)
+VE CHANGE	1 (2%)	3 (7%)	4 (11%)	8 ( 7)
NO CHANGE	4 (8%)	7 (17%)	6 (21%)	17 (14)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29(100)	123(100)

CHI SQUARE = 8.26; D.F = 4; p = 0.08 (n.s)

There were only marginal differences from this pattern of frequencies when the sample was broken down by sentence.

Although the proportions reporting an improvement or no change were very small, it is interesting to speculate why someone might change from seeing their social life as deteriorating to seeing it as improved, or as the same as before. Perhaps the most obvious possibility is that the person had a fairly bad or non-existent social life before their husband was imprisoned. Thus, some may see their social life as having been at a nadir in any case. Further possibilities may be that the respondents initial perception of her social life as having deteriorated is based much more on expectation or anticipation than on reality. Also there may be a group who are actively constraining their social activities because of guilt or fear of stigmatisation. As time progresses she may realise that there has not been as much change as expected or indeed that there has been no adverse consequences in terms of stigma, and she may re - establish her social activities to the level of before the event.. In terms of those who changed from negative to positive, it may be that particularly in long term, sentences the woman develops a social life which excludes the man.

These proposals are supported to some extent by a definite albeit non - significant trend in the diminution of anxiety about social situations which was found to take place over the stage of



sentence sub-groups. Just over half the sample expressed anxiety about entering social situations since the husband's imprisonment. When broken down by stage of sentence, the proportions ranged from 74% of the beginning group to 30% of the end group. While the probability level of 0.07 determined by Chi Square was marginally above the 0.05 significance level accepted here, there would seem to be an obvious suggestion of a linear relationship between anxiety and stage of sentence for the whole sample. Indeed this relationship can be seen most markedly in the long term group, when it is broken down by stage of sentence. Table 7.29 shows that among the long term sentence group the frequency of expressed anxiety about social situations reduced from 74% in the beginning to 30% in the end.

TABLE 7.29 EXPRESSED ANXIETY ABOUT SOCIAL SITUATIONS BY STAGE OF SENTENCE: LONG TERM GROUP

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
YES	17 (74%)	9 (45%)	3 (30%)	29 (54)
NO	6 (26%)	11 (55%)	7 (70%)	24 (46)
TOTAL	23 (100%)	20 (100%)	10 (100%)	53 (100)

CHI SQUARE = 6.65; D.F = 2; P < 0.07

#### 7.5.2 Summary

The majority of respondents reported that their social life had

deteriorated as a result of their husband's imprisonment. The small minority who reported that their social life had not changed or had improved were primarily in the latter stages of the husband's sentence. At the beginning of the sentence, the majority of respondents expressed anxiety about entering social situations. The frequency of this expressed anxiety diminished with subsequent stages of the sentence, although for the sample as a whole this pattern of frequencies was not statistically significant. Within the long term group however, the reduction in expressed anxiety was much more marked and the pattern of frequencies was statistically significant.

## 7.6 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MALE PARTNER.

### 7.6.1 Description Of The Data

The respondents were asked if they thought that the relationship with their male partners had changed since his imprisonment. from table 7.30, it can be seen that while about 40% perceived no change, 30% saw the relationship as deteriorating and 30% saw it as improving.

TABLE 7.30 PERCEIVED CHANGES IN MARITAL RELATIONSHIP BY STAGE OF SENTENCE.

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
IMPROVED	13 (25%)	10 (24%)	13 (45%)	36 (29)
NO CHANGE	22 (42%)	20 (48%)	7 (24%)	49 (40)
DETERIORATED	17 (33%)	12 (29%)	9 (31%)	38 (31)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	123 (100)

What appears to be striking here is the increase in the proportion of respondents in the end group who perceived their relationship as being positive and the corresponding decrease in the proportion who perceived their relationship to have remained unchanged. There was only very marginal differences in the proportions who perceived their relationships to have deteriorated. However the extent of the deterioration was such that within the middle and end stage groups, 19% (n=4), of those who said that their relationship had deteriorated, maintained that the relationship was over. One possible reason for this pattern might be that those who perceive their relationship in a negative light maintain this perception, or indeed become more firmly ensconced within this position, while a proportion of the people who previously perceived no change, may in fact change in a more positive direction in anticipation of the partner's return.

It is not surprising given the sudden removal and continuing absence of the male partner to find that in the whole sample, 93% of respondents reported either periodic or constant loneliness. What is striking however, given findings reported earlier in this chapter is that loneliness does not seem to diminish over the course of the partner's absence in the same way as other types of negative affective states. As table 7.31 shows, the frequency of expressed loneliness changed very little between each stage of sentence group.

TABLE 7.31 EXPRESSED FREQUENCY OF LONELINESS BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
ALWAYS	32 (61%)	24 (57%)	16 (55%)	72 (59)
SOMETIMES	17 (33%)	16 (38%)	9 (31%)	44 (36)
NEVER	3 (6%)	2 (5%)	4 (14%)	9 (7)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	123 (100)

Similarly the way in which loneliness was coped with seemed to be a fairly stable attribute throughout the whole sentence. Respondents were asked how they coped with loneliness and their responses were coded in terms of being 'external', i.e. using external sources of help for example, friends, family, or whether

they were 'internal', that is they used internal resources. examples of this were 'keeping busy', 'reading', 'just blanking it out', 'trying not to think about it', 'having a cry then pulling myself together'. Table 7.32 the pattern of frequencies of internal coping, external coping and the use of both types of strategy.

TABLE 7.32 TYPE OF COPING STRATEGY BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
INTERNAL	22 (44%)	23 (59%)	13 (48%)	58 (47)
EXTERNAL	22 (44%)	15 (36%)	14 (52%)	51 (41)
BOTH	6 (12%)	4 (10%)	2 (7%)	12 (10)
TOTAL	50 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	121 (100)

(Missing Observations = 2)

There was little difference between sentence lengths in the frequency of use of the different types of strategy, and little difference between the stages within each sentence length band. Two individuals were unable to say how they coped with, and they were both in the early stages of the sentence. Thus the data might suggest that the 'locus' of coping strategies for most of the respondents was fairly consistent, and did not change over even long sentences.

#### 7.6.2 Summary

Within the whole group, there was a mixed response regarding whether the marital relationship had improved, deteriorated, or

not changed. it appears that for a large minority, the relationship was perceived to have remained unchanged, and the remainder of respondents were fairly evenly split between improvement and deterioration. It may also be, however, that while negative perceptions remain fairly constant, some individuals who saw the relationship as having not changed, became more positive towards the end of the husband's sentence. Loneliness was a problem suffered to a greater or lesser extent by the vast majority of the respondents, and unlike other negative affective states discussed in this chapter, loneliness did not seem to diminish much over the course of a sentence. Respondents were in the main split fairly evenly regarding whether they used chiefly 'internal' or 'external' coping strategies to deal with loneliness caused by the loss of the male partner, and the type of strategy used seemed to be a fairly stable feature of the individuals behaviour throughout the husband's absence.

## 7.7 MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH THE MALE PARTNER

### 7.7.1 Description Of Data

For the bulk of men in prison and their families at the time of the interviews, the only means by which they could maintain contact were by periodic visiting and by writing letters. The respondents were asked about their use of and attitudes towards these methods of contact, and about the importance of them in

maintaining the relationship between the woman and her male partner.

Table 7.33 shows that 89% of respondents visited their partners in prison, at least infrequently, and the majority, (58%) visited regularly. There was a slight tailing off towards the end of the sentence in 'regular/frequent' visiting, and a slight increase in reported 'infrequent/irregular' visiting. There was little change in the proportions who did not visit their partners.

TABLE 7.33 FREQUENCY OF VISITING BY STAGE OF SENTENCE.

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
FREQUENT/REGULAR	32 (61%)	24 (57%)	15 (52%)	71 (58)
INFREQUENT/IRREGULAR	15 (29%)	12 (29%)	11 (38%)	38 (31)
DOES NOT VISIT	5 (10%)	6 (14%)	3 (10%)	14 (11)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	123 (100)

This pattern however changes somewhat when the individual sentence length group are examined. While the short and medium term group show very little difference in the pattern of frequencies from the whole sample, table 7.34 shows that in the long term group there are some striking differences.

TABLE 7.34 FREQUENCY OF VISITING BY STAGE OF SENTENCE: LONG TERM GROUP

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
FREQUENT/REGULAR	14 (60%)	11 (55%)	3 (30%)	28 (23)
INFREQUENT/IRREGULAR	7 (30%)	6 (30%)	5 (50%)	18 (15)
DOES NOT VISIT	2 (9%)	3 (15%)	2 (20%)	7 (6)
TOTAL	23 (100%)	20 (100%)	10 (100%)	53 (100)

Although this pattern of frequencies is not statistically significant, it does suggest a general trend of decreasing frequency of visiting as time goes on, and particularly in the end stages of the sentence, a marked diminution in the frequency with which the woman visits her partner.

The majority of the respondents saw the visiting arrangements in a negative light, and there was little difference in the proportions within each stage group reporting such sentiments.

TABLE 7.35 ATTITUDE OF RESPONDENTS TOWARDS VISITING ARRANGEMENTS BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
+VE	18 (35%)	16 (38%)	11 (37%)	45 (37)
-VE	34 (65%)	26 (62%)	17 (59%)	77 (63)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	122 (100)

(Missing Observations = 1)



When the overall total is broken down by sentence length, 64% of long term respondents, 50% of medium term respondents and 73% of short term respondents expressed negative attitudes towards the visiting arrangements. The larger proportion of the short term group who expressed negative attitudes is hardly surprising since at the time of the interviews, the visiting facilities for short term prisoners, and those beginning other sentences, were vastly inferior to those for longer term prisoners. Indeed in most of the local prisons men and their families had to endure closed visits, (i.e where prisoners and their visitors were physically separated by a glass partition.)

The respondents were asked about occasions when they had been caused distress by aspects of the visiting facilities. from table 7.36, it can be seen that just over 40% stated that they had experienced some degree of distress as a result of visiting conditions. As would be expected, this occurred more often in the beginning of the sentence when the situation might be unfamiliar and the actual physical conditions would be worse than later in the sentence. Particular aspects which caused the women distress were reported to be travelling, particularly with children, children's misbehaviour at visits, children's distress at visits, husband's distress at visits, demands made by the husband at visits, arguments with the husband, seeing the husband in prison, and leaving the husband after the visit. Six respondents, (5%) made reference to the way in which they were

treated by prison staff and the 'degrading' nature of the visitor's facilities at the prison.

TABLE 7.36 REPORTED DISTRESS CAUSED BY VISITS BY STAGE OF SENTENCE.

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
YES	24 (47%)	15 (38%)	9 (33%)	48 (39)
NO	26 (52%)	25 (62%)	19 (67%)	70 (57)
TOTAL	50 (100%)	40 (100%)	28 (100%)	118 (100)

(Missing Cases = 4)

When the sample is broken down by sentence length it becomes apparent that respondents in the short term group were more likely to report distress than those in the longer term groups. This phenomenon may perhaps arise for the same reasons as proposed for the beginning of sentence group above

The women were asked how much they felt in control of the situation while visiting. Most felt moderately in control particularly in relation to their partners., and this proportion increased with the stage of sentence, although the difference between sentence stages was not significant. A large minority, however felt that they had no control in the situation, particularly at the beginning of the sentence.

TABLE 7.37 PERCEIVED CONTROL IN VISITING SITUATION BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
NONE	22 (42%)	10 (23%)	5 (17%)	37 (30)
SLIGHT/MODERATE	30 (58%)	30 (71%)	22 (76%)	82 (67)
VERY MUCH	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	2 (7%)	4 ( 3)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (100%)	123 (100)

It would appear then that most respondents felt that they were to some extent in control during visits. and the by the end stage 83% felt in control It may initially, be seen as surprising then that even by the end of the sentence, only a minority feel that they can have any meaningful interaction with the husband in terms of telling him about problems they have, or expressing feelings or emotions. It appears that for a large proportion of the respondents, the visits consisted of fairly superficial conversation, due to 'not wanting to worry partner', 'not wanting to make him angry', 'not being able to talk with prison officers listening', feeling that 'there is no point since he can't do anything', having 'got out of the habit', and feeling like the partner is a stranger now. Table 7.38 shows the frequency of responses to this item

TABLE 7.38 ABILITY TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL INTERACTION AT VISITS BY STAGE OF SENTENCE.

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
YES	28 (52%)	18 (50%)	9 (40%)	55 (49)
NO	24 (48%)	18 (50%)	15 (60%)	57 (51)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	36 (100%)	24 (100%)	112(100)

(Missing Observations = 11)

It can be seen that the situation stays much the same throughout the sentence, not seeming to get much better as physical visiting conditions get better and the couple adapt to the situation, nor indeed to get any worse as the couple may grow apart with time. In general it appears that the major way in which a couple in this situation can maintain a relationship, fails to allow for any sort of meaningful interaction for the majority of men in prison and their partners.

In spite of this finding, it appears that at the start of a sentence the majority of respondents saw the visit as being of at least moderate importance in maintaining the relationship with the husband, and this proportion rose steadily until at the end of sentence, 85% of respondents stated that the visits were moderately or very important in helping to maintain the relationship.

TABLE 7.39 IMPORTANCE OF VISITS FOR RELATIONSHIP BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
NOT/SLIGHT	18 (36%)	8 (20%)	4 (15%)	30 (25)
MODERATELY/VERY	32 (64%)	32 (80%)	24 (85%)	88 (75)
TOTAL	50 (100%)	40 (100%)	28 (100%)	118 (100)

(Missing observations = 5)

Thus in the absence of anything else the visiting arrangements, which the majority of the sample have expressed negative sentiments about are perceived as being important in keeping the marital relationship together.

With regard to letters, respondents were asked to state how often they wrote to their partner and how often their partner wrote to them. The range of frequency of letter writing from woman to man was no letters per week to 21 letters per week. (mean = 1.38 letters per week). Thus, while 62 women wrote once per week, 10 wrote one letter per day and one woman wrote every morning, afternoon, and evening.

The women were asked if knowledge that the letters were read had an effect upon what was written. Of those who wrote to their partners, (n=99), only 25 (25%), stated that it did, although 32 stated that they did not like to write 'personal things', or to discuss problems in letters in any event.

When asked if letters were as important as visits for maintaining the relationship, the responses were as in table 7.40

TABLE 7.40 IMPORTANCE OF LETTERS COMPARED WITH VISITS BY STAGE OF SENTENCE.

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
MORE IMPORTANT	5 (14%)	3 (8%)	3 (14%)	11 (11)
LESS IMPORTANT	28 (76%)	31 (77%)	15 (68%)	74 (75)
EQUALLY IMPORTANT	4 (11%)	6 (14%)	4 (18%)	14 (14)
TOTAL	37 (100%)	40 (100%)	22 (100%)	99 (100)

Thus approximately 25% of respondents thought that letters were as important or more important than visits for maintaining relationships.

#### 7.7.2 Summary

The vast majority of the sample visited their partner in prison, and a majority visited regularly. There is however, a suggestion of decreasing frequency of visiting towards the end of long term sentences.

The majority of the sample saw the visiting arrangements in a negative light, and had been caused distress as a result of visiting arrangements. This was particularly the case in short term sentences and at the beginning of all sentences. The majority see themselves as having some degree of control in the

visiting situation, but only a minority felt that they could have a meaningful interaction with their partners at visits. In spite of this, visits were generally seen as being important for the maintenance of the marital relationship.

A majority of the sample wrote to their partners more or less frequently. A minority felt constrained by the possibility of the letters being read before being received by the man, and a minority stated that the writing of letters was more important than visiting for the maintenance of the relationship.

#### 7.8 OTHER ANXIETIES ABOUT PARTNER'S IMPRISONMENT.

##### 7.8.1 Description Of Data

The respondents were asked if they had any anxieties about the return of the male partner upon his release. It is interesting to find that 70% of the whole sample had some anxiety about the return of the male partner. These anxieties included domestic upsets, the effect upon the children, the man's drinking, marital violence, having to give up independence, disruption to the woman's life, and sexual anxieties. Surprisingly, perhaps, there was no particular trend towards increased anxiety at the end of the sentence, as might be expected if anticipatory factors were present. Rather it appeared that anxiety was fairly evenly spread throughout the stages of sentence, with 65% at the beginning, 77% in the middle and 69% at the end and this lack of

pattern was apparent even among the long term group. The respondents were asked about other anxieties they had as a result of the husbands imprisonment, and which had not been covered in the interview. It can be seen from table 7.41 that a majority answered in the affirmative. The most common responses were variants of 'don't know how I'll cope', anxiety about the future, fear that husband will be harmed in prison, fear of illness and children being taken into care, fear of marriage breaking up, fear of forming a new relationship, and fear of burglary.

TABLE 7.41 OTHER EXPRESSED ANXIETIES BY STAGE OF SENTENCE

	BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END	TOTAL
YES	33 (63%)	17 (40%)	16 (55%)	66 (54)
NO	19 (37%)	25 (60%)	13 (45%)	57 (46)
TOTAL	52 (100%)	42 (100%)	29 (199%)	123 (100)

It can be seen that there is no particular pattern between the stage groups, and this was the case between sentence lengths also. It may be then that these less specific anxieties which are more peripheral to the man's imprisonment and perhaps based less upon actual objective reality than anxieties discussed earlier, are much more in the nature of what Spielberger called 'trait' anxiety rather than 'state' anxiety. In this case then they would be less likely to change in response to changes in the environment, and would therefore not change necessarily change



throughout the sentence.

#### 7.9 USE OF AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS FORMAL HELPING AGENCIES

It was fairly surprising to find that a large majority of the whole sample (74%) had had no contact with social work or other helping agencies since the partners imprisonment. This was partly explained perhaps by the fact that when asked to say how they felt about receiving help from agencies, 60% expressed negative sentiments. Thus it appears that informal social networks as described earlier in this chapter, are used more than formal caring networks for help and support.

#### 7.10 CONCLUSION

this chapter has provided a fairly detailed description of the major findings in this study. The findings will be discussed in the light of previous studies in the area in a subsequent chapter. However, it does appear that two major factors pervade the experience of spouse imprisonment. The first is anxiety engendered by the various problems associated with the partners imprisonment, and the second is the role of time, particularly relative time which appears to mediate between the woman's experience and her ability to cope with the situation. These factors will be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EXPLORATORY STATISTICS:

COMPOSITE FACTOR SCORES AS

CRITERION VARIABLES

AND AS INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

8.1 INTRODUCTION

It would seem from the descriptive statistics discussed in the previous chapter that a fairly small number of variables had a possibly disproportionate effect on the variance in the whole data set. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to explore this possibility, identify the variables and to attempt to determine what is the nature of any effect they in fact have.

To this end, the data set was subjected to a principal components analysis, significant factors extracted, a scale constructed from the composite of variables which constitute each factor, and these standardised scales subjected to further analyses, to identify the sources of variance which affect them.

The factors were then used as independent variables in order to assess their effects upon the problem areas reported by the respondents

## 8.2 REDUCTION OF THE DATA.

The whole data set was reduced in the following manner:

1) The data set was subjected to principal components analysis. Principal components analysis was chosen in preference to other methods of factor analysis because it makes fewer assumptions about the data. It also has the advantage that it is based upon an exact mathematical transformation of the data, such that the solution will account for the maximum variance in the data set (Kim 1975).

2) The initial factor matrix was examined and those factors which accounted for at least the same amount of variance in the whole data set as one of the source variables were retained, (i.e. those factors with an eigenvalue of one or more)

3) This produced a reduced subset of variables from the data set which accounted for the maximum proportion of variance, (i.e. the sum of the eigenvalues divided by the total number of variables).

4) These variables were subjected to a further principal components analysis because in the later construction of factor scales it was intended to adhere to the custom of using only the variables which are highly loaded on the various components.

Were the trivial variables retained, they would have been included in the construction of the scales, Thus affecting both the theoretical meaningfulness of the factor, and the score obtained by each case.

5) A terminal solution was obtained by varimax rotation. Essentially rotation attempts to move the axis through euclidean space in such a way that a variable loads highly on one component and lower on the others.

The following variables were those retained after the initial analysis.

- 1) FINANX Anxiety about financial situation
- 2) CHLDANX Anxiety about effect on children
- 3) HOWANXF Degree of Anxiety about financial situation
- 4) STIGANX Anxiety about stigma
- 5) SPFINWOR Specific Financial worries
- 6) SOCANX Anxiety about entering social situations
- 7) CONTROLF perceived degree of control over financial situation
- 8) VSTCONT Perceived degree of personal control over visits
- 9) VSTIMP Importance of visits in maintaining relationship
- 10) AVLENSEN Average length of previous sentences
- 11) PREVSEN Number of previous sentences
- 12) MANWORK Whether man had job before sentence

- 13) VISITATT Attitude towards visiting arrangements in relationship
- 14) VISTSTRS Whether distress had been experienced as result of visit.
- 15) LTRSATT Attitude towards importance of letters in relationship
- 16) COPEREL Locus of coping strategy: Loss of spouse
- 17) OTHRCOPE Locus of coping strategy: general
- 18) WOMCOPE Locus of coping strategy: Finance

The subsequent analysis revealed five factors with eigenvalue > 1.0, these factors accounting for 76% of the total variance

TABLE 8.1 UNROTATED FACTOR MATRIX: QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

VARIABLE	FACTORS				
	1	2	3	4	5
Finanx	89955				
Chldanx	87324				
Howanx	82592				
Stiganx	79905				
Spfirwar	72763				
Socanx	69496				
Controlf	59174			-58825	
Coperel		68910	-65135		
Othercope		65941	-64952		
Womcope		60151	-50188		
Avlensen		59089			
Marwork		54355			
Prevsen			51552		
Vstaant	58134			-58767	
Vstimp				-50293	
Viststrs					73731
Visitatt					68869
Ltrsatt					58426
EIGENVALUE	4.913	2.881	2.068	1.724	1.327
PCT VAR	28.9	16.9	12.3	10.1	7.8

On examination of the unrotated factor matrix, it can be seen that the first and most important factor in terms of accounting for variance is composed of high loading variables which relate to anxiety and control, and the fourth and least important relates to feelings about the visits. However beyond this, the picture becomes much more complex. the number of variables with a factorial complexity of two and the pattern of positive and negative loadings on different factors might suggest some degree of bipolarity between some factors.. However the theoretical meaningfulness of some of the loadings on the factors is somewhat unclear.

A varimax rotation of the factors was carried out in order to make the results more interpretable, and the rotated factor matrix is displayed in table 8.2, overleaf.

The first thing which is noticeable is that the loadings throughout the matrix are very much smaller than in the unrotated factor matrix. However the importance of a factor as indicated by variance accounted for, (i.e the sum of squares of the factor loadings) is of no particular importance in a rotated solution, since it often reflects only the number of variables for a given factor included in the data, relative to the total number of variables, (Kim, 1975). More important perhaps is the magnitude of the loading for a given factor relative to the size of the loadings for the same variable on all other factor, (i.e across

rows). Of more importance too, perhaps is the theoretical meaningfulness of the factor as a construct.

TABLE 8.2 ROTATED PRINCIPAL COMPONENT LOADINGS FOR QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

	FACTORS				
	1	2	3	4	5
Finanx	19620*	03194	00305	03049	03290
Childanx	21249*	-02519	03040	02602	-00882
Howanx	18906*	00488	03517	01970	00734
Stiganx	23415*	-10555*	-00504	-00411	-01581
Spfinwor	-19283*	01871	00353	06177	-04984
Socanx	22919*	-14927*	00590	02372	-03000
Controlf	-05180	38672*	00758	-05711	-03676
Vistoant	-07792	41560*	-02208	-00330	-05326
Vstimp	-06664	34582*	-00289	-00905	01934
Avlensen	-00618	-04865	-00868	41248*	00135
Prevsen	-00316	-01974	-06458	37951*	00903
Marwork	-00799	-01383	01953	40569*	-02246
Visitatt	01880	-02536	-01036	-04189	54837*
Viststrs	04802	-02792	-04409	-03832	57995*
Ltrsatt	03501	-02651	-03204	-03628	53449*
Coperel	02267	-02795	39351*	-03414	01568
Otherope	00890	-01603	38837*	-04136	-00876
Wanope	01321	02103	32658*	01773	-07328

( Decimal Points Omitted: '\*' Signifies high loading)

An examination of the rotated factor matrix, shows that the first factor loads highly on all the variables relating to anxiety. It includes those items from the questionnaire which relate to anxiety about finances, anxiety about entering social situations, anxiety about the children, anxiety about stigma, and generalised anxiety. Thus it has been labelled 'General Anxiety', (GA), One interesting aspect of this factor is that it suggests

that there is a negative relationship between variables relating to the level of anxiety and 'spfinwor', that is the the ability to report specific instances of situations which objectively could be termed anxiety provoking. The second factor loads highly on items relating to control. The highest loadings relate to control over finances, control in the visiting situation, and the importance of visiting for maintaining the marital relationship. Thus it has been labelled Perceived Control, (PC), Interestingly this second factor has in relative terms, moderately high negative loadings on variables relating to anxiety about stigma, and anxiety about entering social situations. Thus it may suggest that perceived control and anxiety about what others think of one are negatively related, i.e the more worried one is about what other people think of one, the less general control over situations one perceives oneself to have. The third factor, loads highly on variables relating to 'locus' of coping strategies, i.e the use of internal or external resources in coping with the loss of the relationship, coping with financial problems, and an item relating to general coping strategies. Thus this factor was labelled, 'Locus Of Coping Strategies', (LCS). The fourth factor is probably less immediately open to interpretation. However, it seems to load highly on items relating to aspects of the spouse's history, ie number of previous prison sentences, average length of previous prison sentences and employment history before this sentence. Thus it has been labelled, 'Spouse History', (SH). The final



factor loads highly on items relating to attitudes towards the methods of communication open to the woman and her partner, i.e feelings about the importance of visits, distress caused by visiting arrangements and attitudes towards letters. Thus it has been labelled 'Attitude To Communication', (AC).

It would seem then that these five factors, General Anxiety, Perceived Control, Locus of Coping, Spouse History and Communication account for most of the variance in the data set, and that there seems to be a negative relationship between perceived control and aspects of social anxiety. In order to investigate whether these factors were associated with the length and stage of the sentence, composite factor scales were constructed for each of the factors and tested by means of analysis of variance

## 8.2 FACTOR SCORES AS CRITERION VARIABLES

8.2.1 Construction Of Factor ScalesComposite indices were constructed for each of the rotated factors. This was done by multiplying the factor loadings for each variable in the factor by the vector of standardised values for variables in the factor. Thus for factor 1 in the rotated matrix, the factor score for

each case in the sample was calculated using the following algorithm:

$$.19620z_1 + .21249z_2 + .18906z_3 + .23415z_4 - .19283z_5 \dots$$

Where  $Z_n = (\text{VAR}_n - \text{mean of VAR}_n) / \text{standard deviation of VAR}_n$   
(Kaiser, 1962)

Thus each of the factor scales had a mean of zero and a standard deviation of 1. Table 8.3 presented a summary of the five factor scales extracted.

TABLE 8.3 MINIMA AND MAXIMA OF FACTOR SCALES AND DIRECTION OF SCALING

	MIN	MAX	DIRECTION
GA	-1.63	1.75	HIGH - LOW
PC	-1.58	2.47	LOW - HIGH
LCS	-1.68	2.04	INT - EXT
SH	-1.53	2.68	+VE - -VE
AC	-1.68	1.58	+VE - -VE

### 8.2.2 Length Of Sentence As An Independent Variable.

A series of one way analyses of variance were carried out with

the length of sentence as independent variable and the factor scores as criterion variables. Table 8.4 Shows the main effects of length of sentence on each of the five scales.

It can be seen then that there are no statistically significant main effects on any of the dimensions by length of sentence. In fact table 8.5, indicates that the differences between deviations from the grand mean in several of the factor scores are so slight as to suggest that any real differences accounted for by the length of the partners sentence is so slight as to be negligible.

This might be seen to be surprising from a theoretical and even at an intuitive level, particularly in the case of anxiety, control and coping. However it should be noted that length of sentence for the whole sample is a somewhat gross classification, given that stage of sentence was indicated by the crosstabulations in the previous chapter to be an important factor, and the whole sample obviously contains a range of stages of sentences. Thus stage may be a confounding variable in this analysis.

TABLE 8.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF MAIN EFFECTS; LENGTH OF SENTENCE ON  
FACTOR SCALES

	GC	PC	LCS	SH	AC
SIGNIFICANCE	0.11	0.21	0.667	0.878	0.878

TABLE 8.5 DEVIATIONS FROM GRAND MEAN; FACTOR SCORES BY LENGTH OF SENTENCE.

LENGTH OF SENTENCE	GC	PC	LCS	SH	AC
Short	-.11	.12	.00	.00	.02
Medium	.01	.05	.06	.02	.00
Long	.14	.02	.08	.01	.00

### 8.2.2 Stage of Sentence As An Independent Variable

In order then to see the effect of stage of sentence upon the scales, the one way analysis of variance was repeated using stage as the independent variable. Table 8.6 displays the main effects of the factor scores by stage of sentence.

TABLE 8.6 MAIN EFFECTS: ONE WAY ANOVA, FACTOR SCORES BY STAGE OF SENTENCE.

	SS	DF	MS	F	SIGNIFICANCE
GA	12.06	2	6.03	6.583	0.002
PC	4.74	2	2.374	2.429	0.09
LCS	1.429	2	0.711	0.711	0.49
SH	1.048	2	0.524	0.520	0.596
AC	1.214	2	0.607	0.603	0.549

This table then indicates that there is a highly significant effect on general anxiety by stage of sentence, and that there may be an effect on perceived control, albeit one which is not statistically significant. Stage of Sentence did not appear to account for any significant amounts of variance in the other three factor scores, in fact accounting for less than length of sentence. In order to determine the nature of the relationships

between the factor scores and stage of sentence, it is instructive to again look at the deviations from the grand mean

TABLE 8.7 DEVIATION FROM GRAND MEAN OF FACTOR SCORE: BEGINNING, MIDDLE, END OF SENTENCE.

	GA	PC	LCS	SH	AC
GRAND MEAN	0	0	0	0	0
BEGINNING	-.32	-.22	.11	.02	-.10
MIDDLE	.08	.11	-.14	-.11	.03
END	.47	.24	.00	.13	.15

Thus it would appear that those at the beginning of the sentence are by far the most anxious, while those in the middle score around the mean for the whole sample and those at the end are by far the least anxious. A similar pattern emerges for perceived control, albeit to a lesser extent. Those at the beginning perceive themselves to have less control than those in the middle of sentence, and the latter, in turn perceive themselves to have less control than those at the end of the sentence. In terms of locus of coping strategies, it would appear that although the differences are small, those at the beginning of the sentence tend to use internal resources, while those at the middle tend to use external resources more, and those at the end, tend to use a more balanced mixture of both. This would seem intuitively to make sense, given that those at the beginning of the sentence have been shown to be more anxious and particularly socially

anxious, and those at the end have had more time, (Both absolute and relative ), than the other two groups to develop a wide range of coping strategies which would perhaps include the utilisation of both internal and external resources.

A major problem for such an analysis of the whole sample however might be that there should be a confounding of time and stage. While those at the end of a short term sentence have had their husbands absent for the same relative amount of time as those at the end of a long sentence, it would be very surprising if the absolute length of the absence had no effect. Those at the mid - stage of a long sentence may have endured the absence of their partner for longer than those at the end of a medium term sentence. This would suggest at least intuitively that there is a likelihood of an interaction between the absolute length of the partners absence and the relative length of the absence. In order to examine this hypothesis, a series of two way ANOVAs was carried out with the factor scores as criterion variables and length and stage of sentence the independent variables.

### 8.2.3 The Interaction Between Length And Stage Of Sentence.

Again it was found that there was no significant effect of length or stage upon LCS, SH or AC. The picture was very different however for both general anxiety and perceived control. Table 8.8 shows the decomposition of variance for both GA and PC.

TABLE 8.8 DECOMPOSITION OF VARIANCE: GA AND PC BY LENGTH AND  
STAGE OF SENTENCE.

SOURCE	GA					PC				
	SS	DF	MS	F	SIG	SS	DF	MS	F	SIG
ADDITIVE	12.98	4	3.24	3.58	.009	8.73	4	2.18	2.39	.05
LENGTH	.35	2	.18	.20	.822	4.03	2	2.02	2.20	.10
STAGE	12.63	2	6.31	6.96	.001	4.69	2	2.35	2.57	.08
INTERACTION	5.71	4	1.43	1.58	.186	9.20	4	2.30	2.52	.04

It can be seen from this table that there appears to be no significant main effect of length of sentence and general anxiety. However, the main effect of stage is highly significant. The additive effects of length and stage are statistically significant, but this is in the main accounted for by the amount of variance explained by stage of sentence rather than by length of sentence. This would suggest that length of sentence has very little effect upon the degree of anxiety expressed by respondents in interviews, and that the stage of sentence at which a respondent's partner is will have a much greater effect. The interaction between length and stage does not produce a significant effect either.

It would also appear, that while neither length nor stage of sentence, when considered separately, account for significant amounts of variance as main effects on perceived control, the additive effects of the two factors account for a significant amount of variance. Thus the total joint effect of length and stage of sentence is in fact greater than the sum of the effects taken separately. This occurs when the two independent variables

are strongly associated. The reason for this is that the main effect of each factor is based only on the amount of variance in the additive effect not accounted for by the other factor. Thus with highly associated factors, each accounts for a lot of the variance in the additive effect, and the remaining variance is correspondingly small, (Kim 1975).

The additive effect then is probably of more importance than the main effects in this case, indicating as it does that the two factors are highly associated and when taken together account for a significant proportion of the variance in perceived control. Indeed this is reinforced by the substantial effect of the interaction between length and stage which is significant at the 0.05 level.

Although the above analysis indicates that stage of sentence, and to a much lesser extent, length of sentence have an effect upon both general anxiety and perceived control, an examination of the pattern of deviations from the grand means will indicate the real nature of that effect. Table 8.9 displays the deviations from the grand means for general anxiety by stage and length of sentence.

The first thing that an examination of the deviations from the grand mean indicate is that there was only a very small linear relationship between anxiety and length of sentence, with the



short sentence group being slightly more anxious than the medium sentence group and both being slightly more anxious than the long sentence group. On the other hand, the relationship between stage and anxiety was much more definite, with the beginning of sentence group being much more anxious than the middle of sentence group and both being much more anxious than the end of sentence group. When length is adjusted for stage, it seems that the effect of length increases for the short term group, producing a larger deviation from the mean in the direction of high anxiety, and marginally for the long term group, in the direction of low anxiety.

TABLE 8.9 COMPARISON OF DEVIATIONS FROM GRAND MEAN: GA BY LENGTH AND STAGE OF SENTENCE.

	UNADJUSTED DEVIATION	ADJUSTED DEVIATION
LENGTH		
1	-.06	-.13
2	-.03	.00
3	.06	.08
STAGE		
1	-.32	-.33
2	.08	.07
3	.47	.49

Within the medium term group, there is a decrease in the deviation in the direction of increased anxiety. Further to

this, it would seem that when stage of sentence is adjusted for length, there is virtually no change, indicating that length has almost no effect on anxiety and does not ameliorate or exacerbate the anxiety associated with stage of sentence.

Table 8.10 displays the deviations from the grand mean of perceived control by length and stage of sentence. It can be seen here that length has an effect upon perceived control which is greater than its effect upon anxiety.

The short and medium sentence groups scoring relatively highly and long sentences scoring low. In terms of stage those at the beginning of a sentence scored lowest with those in the middle of a sentence scoring more highly, but not as highly as those who are in the end stages of a sentence, whose perceived control is very much higher.

TABLE 8.10 GROUP DEVIATIONS FROM GRAND MEAN : PERCEIVED CONTROL  
BY LENGTH AND STAGE OF SENTENCE.

	UNADJUSTED DEVIATION	ADJUSTED DEVIATION
LENGTH		
1 Short	09	06
2 Medium	21	23
3 Long	-20	-19
STAGE		
1 Beginning	-22	-23
2 Middle	11	13
3 End	24	22

When length is adjusted for stage, the effect of length changes only very marginally, with both long and short term groups increasing perceived control very slightly, and medium term group decreasing perceived control. Similarly, with stage, when it is adjusted for length, the deviations from the mean change hardly at all. Thus it would appear that the longer the partner's sentence, the less control over the situation one would perceive oneself to have, particularly at the beginning of the sentence. As the sentence progresses, perceived control seems to increase.

This analysis would seem to suggest quite strongly that it is the amount of time the husband has already been absent relative to the amount of time he will be absent which is the major mediating factor in anxiety and perceived control, rather than the absolute amount of time the husband will be absent. It may of course be that the very fact that the husband has been imprisoned engenders what the female partner perceives as 'a lot' of anxiety and that she does not necessarily see this relative to the amount of anxiety she would hypothetically experience, was her partner to be serving a sentence twice as long. Nor indeed is it likely that in everyday life, the woman would compare her own level of anxiety with that of someone whose husband is serving a much longer term, and determine her own level of anxiety relative to the other's. Thus outwith the context of stage of sentence, she does not have a reference point to relate her present anxiety levels to. In terms of stage of sentence

however, those in the latter stages of their partner's sentence do have some kind of reference point, i.e, how anxious they were or how in control they felt at the beginning of the sentence. They would be able then to gauge how anxious or in control they felt at this point compared with previous levels of anxiety and control. This in conjunction with any coping strategies which have been adopted would perhaps naturally make the stage at which the respondent was, accountable for more variance than the bare length of the sentence.

In the next section of this chapter, both anxiety and control along with the other three factor scores will be used as independent variables in order to explore the effect which they have on the problem areas reported by the respondents in the sample.

### 8.3 FACTOR SCORES AS INDEPENDENT VARIABLES.

#### 8.3.1 Introduction

In this section of the chapter, it is intended to explore the major problem areas experienced by the respondents in terms of their relationship to the five factor scores. In order to achieve this, the factor scores were recoded as dichotomous variables by splitting them at the median, i.e those on or below the median and those above the median. The factor scores were

then used to split the sample in to two groups; Those scoring above the median on the factor score, and those scoring below the median. Differences between the two groups were tested for by means of a Mann-Whitney 'U' test. By examining the mean ranks, the direction, and an approximation of the magnitude, of the difference can be ascertained. Use of the Mann - Whitney with larger sample sizes of more than forty, on SPSSX, produces a normal approximation rather than an exact probability. All 'Z' scores are corrected for ties.

There was, of course, a high degree of association between the factor scales and their component variables in each problem area. This produced spuriously high significance levels on these variables, and they are not reported in this section.

#### 8.3.2 General Anxiety As An Independent Variable.

In terms of demographic characteristics, there was nothing to distinguish high anxiety from low anxiety subjects. Age, length of time married or cohabiting, number of children, and age of children were not distinguished by score on general anxiety. Indeed, although it might be thought likely that the number of previous sentences served by the male partner during the relationship would be negatively related to the level of anxiety experienced by the female partner, this was not the case. There was a very slight tendency for the high anxiety respondents to report a lower number of previous sentences, (mean ranks; low

anxiety = 63.31, high anxiety = 60.71), but this was not statistically significant. Neither was there a significant difference in the average lengths of previous sentences.

#### 8.3.2.1 Anxiety And Finance

There were few apparent significant differences between high and low anxiety subjects in the problem area of finance. It should be noted however that most respondents reported financial problems in any case, and thus the sample was fairly homogeneous in this area. One particular item which was of interest was whether the woman had secured employment since the partner's imprisonment. It was indicated here that there was a positive relationship between whether the woman was anxious and whether she had secured a job, with low anxiety subjects being employed more than high anxiety subjects, ( $Z=-2.39$ ,  $p=0.01$ ). Thus it may be that women who are less anxious engage in strategies to resolve perceived problems, or it may be that by engaging in such strategies, the woman reduces her anxiety about the situation she is in. There was also a highly significant relationship between anxiety and reported control over financial affairs, with high anxiety subjects perceiving themselves to have little control and vice versa, ( $Z=-2.74$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

#### 8.3.2.2 Anxiety And The Children

It appears that those respondents who scored high on anxiety were more likely to attempt to hide the male partner's whereabouts

from the children. There was a significant difference between high and low anxiety respondents in whether they had told the children of the situation at the time of the interview, with low anxiety subjects stating that they had told the children and high anxiety subjects stating that they had not, ( $Z=-2.36$ ,  $p=0.01$ ). High anxiety subjects were also more likely to state that they had noticed an adverse change in the child's behaviour, ( $Z=-2.03$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). There was no significant difference, however, between anxiety levels in whether respondents could cite specific instances of behavioural problems, whether they had received adverse reports about the children from outside the home, whether the child spoke about the father, and whether the child had been exposed to gossip outside the home. Neither do they differ significantly in terms of children's Health problems. Thus it appears that in the matter of their children, anxious subjects are more likely than low anxiety subjects, to experience adverse consequences which are predominantly based upon their own interpretation, and that they do not differ significantly from low anxiety subjects on consequences which might be seen to be more 'objective'.

#### 8.3.2.3 Anxiety And Social Relationships

Since the sample was fairly homogeneous in the area of relationships with both the woman's family and the man's family, Then it is not surprising that anxiety had little effect on such relationships. Nor indeed did anxiety have any significant effect

on whether the relationships changed after the husband was imprisoned. There did seem to be, however, a relationship between the level of anxiety and the number of close friendships a respondent had. It appears that the low anxiety respondents were more likely to report having close friends than were the high anxiety group, ( $Z = -2.15$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This might suggest that having the support of friends helps to reduce the anxiety engendered by spouse imprisonment. However, this does not correspond with the fact that there was no significant difference between the groups on whether they perceived their friends as being a potential source of help. In fact the sample was fairly homogeneous here in reporting that they did not see their friends in this way. An alternative explanation would be that high anxiety respondents may fear the reaction of friends and withdraw from contact with them. However, this again was perhaps contradicted by the fact that the sample as a whole did not perceive any adverse change in their friends' attitude towards them. Perhaps more likely than might be the proposition that when asked if they saw their friends as a source of help, respondents did not construe this as being general support, without the friends actually doing something overt, but saw it as meaning some specific action. Thus respondents might say that their friends were not a source of help even if they were providing general support. If this were the case, then the fact of having friends might mean that a person receives more help than someone who does not have such friendships. Thus it may be



that social supports, even those where the individual does not engage in some specific activity, are a factor which helps to ameliorate the stress of an event like spouse imprisonment.

It would appear that those who are less anxious are more likely to perceive their relationships with the community as being either neutral or positive and those who are highly anxious are likely to perceive such relationships in a more negative light. There was a definite, (albeit marginally non-significant), trend toward high anxiety respondents reporting negative relationships with neighbours, and low anxiety respondents reporting neutral or positive relationships, (  $Z = -1.77$ ,  $p < 0.07$ ). There was no significant difference between the groups in whether they perceived their neighbours to have reacted to the situation in a positive or a negative manner. It will be remembered from chapter six, that most respondents recognised that their neighbours were fairly indifferent to the events which had occurred. Not surprisingly, then, there was no significant difference in whether respondents saw their neighbours as a source of help.

#### 8.3.2.4 Anxiety And Respondent's Social Circumstances.

There appears to be little relationship between anxiety and changes in the respondents social circumstances. There was no significant difference between high and low anxiety groups in whether respondents' social life had changed as a result of the

spouse's imprisonment. There was also no significant difference between the groups in whether they used internal or external resources in coping with the loss of social relationships, although there was a slight trend towards high anxiety respondents using internal resources and low anxiety respondents using external resources. There was a significant difference in the expressed degree of loneliness experienced by respondents in the different groups, with high anxiety subjects reporting a much higher degree of loneliness than low anxiety subjects, ( $Z = -3.92$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Again it is interesting to speculate on any causal sequence which exists here. Does anxiety cause people to suffer more as a result of the spouse's absence, or does loneliness increase the level of anxiety within the individual? In terms of theory, it would probably be more realistic to postulate an interaction between the two, with negative affect as a result of the husband's absence being seen as a stress reaction, which in itself, unless adapted to, is likely to further increase the amount of negative affect which the individual is experiencing.

8.3.2.5 Anxiety And Respondents Relationship With The Spouse. there was no significant difference between the groups on whether the relationship with the spouse was seen to be positive or negative. There was however a significant difference in whether the relationship had changed, and how it had changed. The low anxiety group were more likely to report that the relationship

had not changed or that it had improved, while the high anxiety group was more likely to report a deterioration in the relationship, ( $Z = -2.31$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus while the majority of the sample reported that the relationship was positive, there did appear to be some deterioration, mainly among the high anxiety group.

There was no significant difference in the respondents attitude to the visiting arrangements. From chapter six, it can be seen that respondents were almost universally negative about the visiting arrangements. However, it may be surprising that there was not any significant difference between the groups in whether they had been caused distress as a result of visiting arrangements. It might be expected that those who were experiencing higher levels of anxiety would be more prone to distress at visits. This did not seem to be the case. There was a significant difference between the groups on the degree of control they felt they had at visits, with the low anxiety group feeling more in control than the high anxiety group, ( $Z = -2.08$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); and there was also a significant difference in whether the respondents felt able to carry on a meaningful interaction with the spouse at visits, with the high anxiety group reporting that they could not discuss feelings, emotions and problems at visits, ( $Z = -3.05$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Both groups were similar in the extent to which they assessed the visiting arrangements as being important for the maintenance of the

relationship. Thus it appears that although the general attitude towards visits was negative, the low anxiety group seemed to be more in control at visits and perhaps got more out of them than did the high anxiety group.

#### 8.3.2.6 Summary

There was little relationship between anxiety and financial problems, largely because the sample was homogeneous in this respect. Low anxiety respondents were more likely to feel in control of their financial affairs than high anxiety respondents. With regard to children, high anxiety respondents were more likely to attempt to hide the situation from them, and seemed to be more likely to interpret events regarding their children in a negative way. There was no difference in the reporting of more objective consequences of the father's imprisonment between the groups. Low anxiety respondents were more likely to have close friendships than high anxiety respondents, and were less likely to perceive their relations with the wider community as being negative. High anxiety respondents were more likely to report a deterioration in the relationship with the spouse, although there was no significant difference between the groups in their assessment of the general state of the relationship. Low anxiety respondents were more likely to perceive themselves as having control in the visiting situation and were more likely to be able to discuss emotions, problems etc at visits, than high anxiety respondents.

### 8.3.3 Perceived Control As An Independent Variable

As with anxiety, there were no demographic factors which were differentiated by perceived control. Both groups were similar in terms of age, length of time married or cohabiting, and number and age of children. Interestingly, too there was no significant difference between the groups on the number of previous sentences, and the average length of previous sentences. This is interesting given that theoretically, a number of authors have postulated a strong relationship between information, predictability, and perceived control, (see chapter four). It might be thought therefore that those whose partners had a number of previous sentences, might find the situation more predictable than those for whom this was the first time, and would therefore perceive themselves to be more in control of the situation. This was not the case.

#### 8.3.3.1 Perceived Control And Financial Problems.

There was no apparent relationship between perceived control and respondents' assessment of their financial situation, nor on whether the woman had secured employment after the partner's sentence. the relationship between control and anxiety was revealed however by the fact that there was a significant difference between the groups on both a) whether the woman was anxious about her financial situation, ( $Z = -3.04$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), and b) the degree to which respondents were so anxious, ( $Z = -2.98$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). There was also a trend, ( $P = 0.1$ , NS), for low control

respondents to use internal resources to attempt to cope with financial problems, and high control groups to use external resources. Finally there was a significant difference between the groups on whether they could recount specific financial difficulties which they had experienced, with low control respondents reporting more financial problems than high control respondents, (  $Z = -2.04$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus it would appear that low control respondents report more financial problems, are more anxious about their finances and may use internal resources to attempt to solve their problems than high control respondents.

#### 8.3.3.2 Perceived Control And Problems With Children

There did not appear to be any significant differences between the high control and low control groups on any of the variables relating to problems with the children, except the variable relating to the degree of anxiety expressed by respondents about the general effect of the spouse's imprisonment upon the children. Here it appeared that low control respondents were more anxious than high control respondents, ( $Z = -2.05$ ,  $p < 0.04$ ).

#### 8.3.3.3 Perceived Control And Family And Social Relationships.

Although there were no significant differences between groups on relationships with Families, there did appear to be a trend towards high control respondents reporting neutral or positive relationships with their own family, while low control respondents were more likely to report negative

relationships, ( $p=0.10$ ). Similarly, there appeared to be a trend towards high control individuals reporting no change or a positive change in relationships after the spouse was imprisoned, while low control respondents were more likely to report negative changes if changes had taken place, ( $p<.12$ ). It should be noted that the whole sample was fairly homogeneous on the items relating to family relationships, the majority of the sample reporting positive or no change. A similar level of homogeneity was apparent in the variable relating to change. Thus, even if there is no statistically significant difference, a trend towards differentiation on these variables by perceived control is noteworthy. There was a significant difference between the groups on whether the groups perceived a change in the attitude of friends after the spouse's imprisonment, with the low control group being more likely to report a negative change if a change occurred, and the high control group being more likely to report a positive change, ( $Z = -1.99$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Similarly there was a Marginally non-significant difference between groups on their reports of the reaction of neighbours to the spouse's imprisonment. Again the high group were likely to perceive any change as positive, while low control respondents were more likely to perceive any change as negative, ( $p<0.07$ ).

Thus although many of the apparent trends in this section were not statistically significant, it may be that there are indications of a trend towards a relationship between social

support and perceived control. this would be consistent with theory and empirical findings reported by earlier investigators, and will be discussed in a later chapter.

#### 8.3.3.4 Perceived Control And Other Problem Areas

There were no significant differences found between the groups in variables relating to social circumstances, nor in variables relating to visits or letters. However, one particularly interesting result arose when the relationship between perceived control and anxiety about the husband's return to the family after release was considered. Whereas in other variables relating to anxiety, the low control respondents were more likely to be the more anxious, on this variable, the high control respondents were more likely to be the more anxious, ( $Z=-6.43$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). This may suggest that those respondents who perceive themselves to be most in control, also perceive themselves as having most to lose in terms of role shifts, responsibilities, responsibilities, status, and general loss of control.

#### 8.3.3.5 Summary

It would appear theme that while no significant difference was observed between groups on length and number of previous sentences, there was a relationship between several indicators of anxiety and control. These aspects of anxiety were in the areas of finance, children's problems, social relationships and the



return of the spouse to the family. In the area of social relationships, while none of the differences between groups regarding relationships with their family attained the 0.05 level of significance, indications are that there may be a positive relationship between perceived control and social support. If this is the case in the area of spouse imprisonment, it would be consistent with earlier findings in other areas of stress and anxiety.

#### 8.3.4 Locus Of Coping Strategy As An Independent Variable

While the previous two factor scores appears to account for variance in a number of problem areas in the data, it would seem that locus of coping strategies is much more specific in the areas in which it discriminates, and even here none of the differences reached statistical significance. There were no significant differences between internal and external respondents in demographic variables, nor in variables related to financial problems. Where this factor score seemed to discriminate most was in the area of problems relating to the children, although in none of these did the differences reach the 0.05 probability level. Those respondents who were more likely to use internal resources to cope with stress seemed to perceive the children as having more behavioural problems as a result of the father's imprisonment than did those who used external resources, ( $Z=-1.63$ ,  $p<0.10$ ). In addition to this, they were more likely to report

that the child had heard about the father's imprisonment from outside the home, ( $Z = -1.85$ ,  $p < 0.06$ ), and were also more likely to report the child as having health problems, ( $Z = -1.85$ ,  $p < 0.06$ ). Thus while it can be seen from section 8.3.3.2 that locus of coping strategy may be associated with anxiety, LCS on its own does not seem to account for much of the variance in the problem areas faced by women in the sample.

#### 8.3.5 Spouse's History As An Independent Variable.

This factor scale was composed of variables relating to offending and employment history. For the sake of brevity, those whose husband's have a history of prison sentences and unemployment will be labelled the 'negative' group and those whose spouses have less of such a history will be labelled the 'positive' group. Given the composition of the factor scale, while there is a high degree of association between demographic characteristics and the factor scale, these are spurious and will not be presented here. There was also no significant differences between the 'positive' and 'negative' groups on any of the variables relating to financial problems, nor on the female partner's social circumstances.

##### 8.3.5.1 Spouse's History And Problems With Children

It appears from the data that the negative group report their children as having more problems as a result of the father's imprisonment than do the positive group. The negative group were

more likely to report behavioural problems in their children than the positive group, (  $Z = -2.03$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). There was also a significant difference between the groups in their reporting of the child hearing about the father's imprisonment from outside the home, again with the negative group reporting such an event with greater frequency, (  $Z = -1.92$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). There were two other variables which showed a difference slightly above the 0.05 level. The negative group were more likely to state that they had received adverse reports about the children's behaviour from outside the home than the positive group, ( $p < 0.09$ ), and they were also more likely to be able to cite specific instances of behavioural problems, ( $p = 0.10$ ). Thus while the negative group saw more behavioural problems in their children resulting from the father's imprisonment, they also saw their children as being more exposed to gossip or influence from outside the home.

#### 8.3.5.2 Spouse's History And Family And Social Relationships

There was a significant difference between the groups on whether the relationship with the family had changed since the husband's imprisonment, although again there was no significant difference on whether the relationship was seen as being positive or negative. The positive group were more likely to see the relationship with the woman's family as having changed for the better or as not having changed at all, while the negative group was more likely to see the relationship as having changed for the worse, ( $Z = -2.35$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ). On the other hand, there was a

tendency, (albeit marginally non -significant), for the negative group to see the relationship with the spouse's family as being negative, while the positive group were more likely to see this relationship as being neutral or positive, ( $p=0.07$ ). There was little difference between the groups on whether this relationship had changed or not, since the spouse's imprisonment. It may be then that while most of the sample perceive the relationship with their own family to be positive, or at worst neutral, the group whose spouses have the least favourable imprisonment and employment history, are more likely to see a deterioration in the relationship with their own family as a result of the spouse's imprisonment. The relationship with the in -laws seems to be somewhat different, in that a greater number, particularly in the negative group. will perceive it as being less favourable. Also, the fact that the sample as a whole does not report a high degree of change in the relationship with the in - laws since the spouse's imprisonment, suggests that any antipathy existed before the husband's imprisonment.

#### 8.3.5.3 Spouse's History And Maintaining Contact

It would appear that the spouses history had a fairly major effect upon the female partner's efforts to and attitude towards maintaining contact with him while he was in prison. There appears to be a relationship between spouse history and frequency of visits, with the negative group taking up the opportunity of visiting less often than the positive group, ( $Z= -2.67$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

In addition, the negative group have a more unfavourable attitude towards the visiting arrangements than do the positive group, ( $Z = -1.96$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and are more likely to have been caused distress at visits than the positive group, ( $Z = -2.20$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

#### 8.3.5.4 Spouse History And Other Problem Areas.

A final two important differences highlighted by the spouse's history were that the negative group were more likely to perceive the relationship with their husband's as having changed for the worse than were the positive group, ( $Z = -3.56$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and the negative group were also more likely to report having health problems than the positive group, ( $Z = -2.18$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

#### 8.3.5.5 Summary

The negative group were more likely to report problems with children than the positive group, although some of the differences were not statistically significant. The spouse's history seemed to have an influence on family relationships, with the negative group more likely to perceive a negative change in the relationship. Regarding relations with the in laws, the negative group were more likely to report a negative relationship, and this antipathy seems to have predated the husband's current sentence. The negative group were more negative towards visiting conditions, and visited the spouse less. They were also likely to have experienced more distress at

visits. Again the negative group were more likely to report a deterioration in the relationship with the spouse. They were also more likely to report having health problems.

#### 8.3.6 Attitudes To Communication As An Independent Variable.

Although this factor accounted for significant differences between groups in only two variables, these differences are telling. Firstly, those who are more negative about visits and letters were less likely to be able to discuss problems and emotions at visits, ( $Z = -1.94$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Secondly, These same people were more likely to report that the relationship with their spouse had deteriorated while he was in prison, ( $Z = -1.94$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus this may reinforce the feeling of the majority of the sample that visits, restricted in nature as they are, may be very important in helping to sustain the relationship between the woman and her spouse.

## CHAPTER NINE

### ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM LONGITUDINAL SUB - SAMPLE

#### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

A sub sample of respondents were interviewed on four occasions over the period of twelve months. This was done in order to explore the process of coping in the early stages with spouse imprisonment as a stressful experience, and to attempt to establish whether, and at what point, any adaptation to the event might occur. In order to ensure that all respondents in the sub - sample would be available for interview twelve months after the first interview, and that, even with full parole (i.e, two thirds of the sentence remitted), the respondent's spouse would not have been released, it was decided to restrict selection of the sub - sample to those respondents from cell seven, that is women whose spouse is in the early stages of a long term sentence. As described in chapter six, twelve respondents from this cell were interviewed using the semi - structured interview schedule, and then three times subsequently, at four monthly intervals, using the same instrument.

The data from each administration of the questionnaire was compared with the data from each of the other interviews, by one way analysis of variance with the questionnaire items as criterion variables and time of administration as the factor. The data were further analysed by an A Posteriori Contrast Test (Student Newman Keuls test). Test of this type involve a systematic procedure for comparing all possible pairs of group means. A range is calculated, which the difference in group means has to attain in order to be significant at the 0.05 level. The Newman Keuls test was chosen because it can be used whether or not the analyses of variance are significant. This test also has the advantage that it calculates a separate range for each individual group mean on the basis that the larger the group the larger has to be the difference in means in order to be declared significant. Thus it is designed to be used with groups of different sizes (see Kim 1975, for a fuller discussion).

## 9.2 CHANGES IN RESPONSES TO INTERVIEW ITEMS BETWEEN INTERVIEWS

### 9.2.1 Changes In Financial Problems Between Interviews

There were no significant differences in respondents reports regarding their financial situation between the four interviews (One - way Anova;  $F=1.57$ , d.f. = 3,  $p = 0.21$ ). There was, however, a significant difference in the level of anxiety expressed by the women with regard to their finances (  $F = 2.86$ , D.F = 3,  $p = 0.05$ ). Table 9.1 shows the sub - sample means for



this item obtained on each of the interviews, and table 9.2 displays the results of the Newman Keuls comparisons of differences between sample means. It can be seen that the only difference between means to attain a specified range was the difference between trial one and trial four.

TABLE 9.1 SAMPLE MEANS ON DEGREE OF ANXIETY ABOUT FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OBTAINED IN THE FOUR INTERVIEWS

TRIAL	1	2	3	4
MEAN	2.18	1.66	1.66	0.5

TABLE 9.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EACH PAIR OF TRIAL MEANS OBTAINED USING NEWMAN KEULS PROCEDURE: DEGREE OF ANXIETY EXPRESSED ABOUT FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

TRIAL COMPARISON			
1 with 2 (--)	2 with 3 (--)	3 with 4 (--)	
1 with 3 (--)	2 with 4 (--)		
1 with 4 (++)			

(--) = NOT SIGNIFICANT; (++) =  $P < 0.05$

Thus while there are no significant differences between interviews one and two, one and three, two and three, two and four, or three and four, there is a significant difference between interviews one and four. Given that this item was scored from zero = 'not anxious' to three = 'very anxious', the higher the score on this item, the more anxiety the respondent has expressed. It should be noted, however, that this item is scored on an ordinal scale, based upon individuals' subjective interpretation of the categories. It is therefore difficult to justify asserting anything more than that there was a general diminution in felt anxiety among the sample as a whole over the period of one year, and that this seemed to happen towards the end of the twelve month follow up period.

There was no significant difference between the interviews in the respondents ability to recount specific financial problems ( $F = 1.95$ ,  $D.F = 3$ ,  $p = 0.14$ ), nor were there any significant differences in the respondents perceived control over their financial situation ( $F = 0.41$ ,  $D.F = 3$ ,  $p = 0.67$ ).

It would appear then that over the twelve month period, while the level of financial problems perceived by the respondents remained fairly stable, the respondents' anxiety about the financial situation reduced. This would tend to lend support to the proposition in the previous chapter that the initial anxiety, while being focused upon specific problem areas may be engendered

by the spouse's imprisonment, may in fact be general in nature, and may be somewhat independent of the objective reality to which it has been attached.

#### 9.2.2 Changes In Problems With Children Between Interviews

There was no significant difference between the interviews on whether the respondents had told the children about the husband's imprisonment ( $F=0.403$ ,  $D.F = 3$ ,  $p = 0.46$ ). This would suggest that those respondents who had not told the child at the beginning of the twelve month period tended still to be maintaining this subterfuge at the end of the twelve month period. There was also no difference between the interviews on whether the respondents perceived any negative effect upon the children's behaviour caused by the spouse's imprisonment ( $F = 0.115$ ,  $D.F = 3$ ,  $p = 0.83$ ).

There were significant differences between the interviews regarding whether there had been any adverse reports about the children's behaviour from outside the home ( $F = 7.67$ ,  $D.F = 3$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Table 9.3 displays the sample means for each trial, and table 9.4 displays the results of the Newman Keuls procedure.

TABLE 9.3 SAMPLE MEANS ON ADVERSE REPORTS ABOUT CHILDREN'S  
BEHAVIOUR FROM OUTSIDE THE HOME OBTAINED FROM EACH OF  
THE FOUR INTERVIEWS,

TRIAL	1	2	3	4
SAMPLE MEAN	1.27	1.17	2.00	1.80

TABLE 9.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EACH PAIR OF TRIAL  
MEANS OBTAINED USING NEWMAN KEULS PROCEDURE: ADVERSE  
REPORTS ABOUT CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR FROM OUTSIDE THE  
HOME

TRIAL COMPARISON			
1 with 2	(--)	2 with 3	(++)
1 with 3	(++)	2 with 4	(++)
1 with 4	(++)	3 with 4	(--)

(--) = NOT SIGNIFICANT: (++) =  $P < 0.05$

This item was scored on a dichotomous scale; one = yes and two = no. Thus, the nearer the sample mean is to one, the greater the number of people who answered 'yes', and the nearer the mean is to two, the greater the number of people who answered 'no'. It can be seen from table 9.3, therefore, that in the first and second interviews, most people answered 'yes' to the question 'Have you had reports about children's behaviour problems from outside the home?'. After the first four months of the study period, that is during the second and third interviews, most respondents answered 'no', to the question. The indication that respondents were receiving fewer adverse reports about the children after the first four months is supported by table 9.4. Here it can be seen that there is a significant difference between the first two interviews and the second two interviews, and no significant difference between interviews one and two and interviews three and four.

There were no significant differences between the interviews regarding whether and in what way the child spoke about the father ( $F = 0.65$ , D.F = 3,  $p = .58$ ), nor regarding the frequency with which the child was taken to visit the father ( $F = 1.24$ , D.F = 3  $p=0.30$ ).

There were no significant differences between the interviews with regard to whether the respondent was anxious about the effect of the father's imprisonment upon the child ( $F = 1.57$ , D.F

= 3, p =0.21). However when the degree of anxiety among those who have said they are anxious, is examined, significant differences between interviews are found (F = 4.48, D.F =3 p < 0.01). Table 9.5 displays the sample means obtained in the four interviews and table 9.6 displays the comparisons between each pair of interviews.

TABLE 9.5 SAMPLE MEANS OBTAINED IN FOUR INTERVIEWS: DEGREE OF ANXIETY EXPRESSED ABOUT EFFECT OF FATHERS' IMPRISONMENT ON CHILDREN.

TRIAL			
1	2	3	4
SAMPLE MEAN 2.36	1.66	1.16	0.50

TABLE 9.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EACH PAIR OF SAMPLE MEANS, USING NEWMAN KEULS PROCEDURE: DEGREE OF ANXIETY EXPRESSED ABOUT EFFECT OF FATHERS' IMPRISONMENT ON CHILDREN

TRIAL COMPARISON		
1 with 2	(--)	2 with 3
		(--)
3 with 4	(--)	
1 with 3	(--)	2 with 4
		(--)
1 with 4	(++)	

(--)= NOT SIGNIFICANT: (++) = P < 0.05

It can be seen from these two tables that the reduction in the degree of anxiety expressed by respondents in relation to their children, is remarkably similar to the way in which felt anxiety about finances reduced. This again lends support to the proposition that anxiety in this context may, at least initially, be a generalised phenomenon. It appears that as anxiety about one problem area reduces, so does anxiety about other problem areas. This reduction would seem to be somewhat independent of changes in the objective burden in these problem areas.

It would appear then that over the twelve month period, problems with the children changed only slightly. However, anxiety about potential problems reduced quite dramatically over the period. In this respect, it is similar to finance as a problem area.

#### 9.2.3 Changes In Family And Social Relationships Between Interviews

There were no significant differences between the interviews concerning the nature of the women's relationship with their families ( $F = 0.76$ ,  $p=0.52$ ) nor any significant difference with regard to whether the relationship had changed ( $F = 1.63$ ,  $p=0.20$ ). The majority of the sub - sample enjoyed a positive relationship with their families, and this had not changed in the twelve months of the longitudinal study. The same was the case regarding the respondents' relationship with their in - laws, The

majority had a positive relationship and no statistically significant changes took place over the twelve months.

There was no change in the number of friends the respondents claimed over the twelve month period (  $F = 0.68$ ,  $p = 0.57$ ), nor was there any significant change in the quality of these friendships ( $F = 2.15$ ,  $p = 0.12$ ). There was no indication that the respondents became more likely to see friends as a source of help over the twelve month period ( $f = 0.79$ ,  $p = 0.51$ ).

With regard to neighbours, there were no significant differences between the interview means concerning the quality of the relationship ( $F = 0.24$ ,  $p = 0.87$ ), whether the neighbours had reacted in any particular fashion since the spouse's imprisonment ( $F = 1.45$ ,  $p = 0.25$ ), or whether the neighbours were seen as a potential source of help ( $F = 1.54$ ,  $p = 0.22$ ). As discussed in chapter seven, it would appear that the neighbours were seen as being fairly neutral about the event, and were not seen as being a source of help. There did seem to be some slight change across the interviews in whether the respondents expressed anxiety about stigma. Table 9.6 displays the sample means obtained in each of the four interviews for this variable.



TABLE 9.6 SAMPLE MEANS OBTAINED FROM EACH OF THE FOUR INTERVIEWS:  
EXPRESSED ANXIETY ABOUT STIGMA

	TRIAL			
	1	2	3	4
SAMPLE MEAN	1.27	1.27	1.33	1.75

Again this was a dichotomous variable scored as follows; one = yes; two = no. Thus the closer the sample mean is to one, the greater the number of people in the sample who responded in the affirmative to the question 'do you feel anxious about other people's reaction to the fact that your husband is in prison?' The closer the sample mean is to two, the greater the number who answered in the negative. It can be seen that most people in the sample were anxious about stigma at the first interview, and this proportion decreased over the twelve months until most people at the fourth interview were not anxious about stigma. This trend did not account for a significant amount of variance between groups however ( $F = 2.18$ ,  $p = 0.11$ ), nor did the Newman Keuls procedure identify significant differences between any pair of sample means.

It would appear then that family and social relationships had changed very little over the course of the longitudinal study.

Generally, respondents had a mainly positive relationship with their families and their in laws, and this did not change. The number of friendships claimed by the respondents and the quality of those friendships did not change over the twelve months. The perception of neighbours and their reaction to the family did not appear to change much over the period either. There may be some decrease in anxiety about stigma over the twelve months. However, this was not shown to be significant in this study.

#### 9.2.4 Changes In Social Circumstances Over The Four Interviews

There were no significant differences found between the interviews regarding the respondents' social circumstances. There was no difference in the respondents perception of changes in their social life since their spouses' imprisonment, no differences in the degree of loneliness they reported , no change in the type of strategy used to cope with loneliness, and no change in the level of reported anxiety about entering social situations.. In sum, then, notably little change in the period of a year. This of course may be related to the fact that previous studies have noted a degree of social withdrawal on the part of the spouses of imprisoned men. In addition, it was noted in chapter seven of this study that in the early stages of the sentence, this was most acute. Thus it may be that no changes occurred for these women because they did not put themselves in the position of allowing changes to occur.

### 9.2.5 Changes In The Relationship With The Spouse Over The Four Interviews

There was a significant difference between the responses to the question, 'has the relationship with your husband changed since his imprisonment?' over the four interviews. Table 9.7 shows the sample means obtained for this item from each of the four interviews

TABLE 9.6 SAMPLE MEANS OBTAINED FROM EACH OF THE FOUR INTERVIEWS;  
HAS THE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR HUSBAND CHANGED SINCE HE  
WENT TO PRISON

	TRIAL			
	1	2	3	4
SAMPLE MEAN	2.25	2.50	1.75	1.83

This item was scored on an ordinal scale as follows: one = 'yes, positively', two = 'no change', three = 'yes negatively'. Thus if the sample mean is greater than 2.5, this would indicate that most respondents answered that the relationship with their spouse had deteriorated. A sample mean of less than 1.5, indicates that most respondents had stated that the relationship had improved. If the sample mean lay within the range 1.5 to 2.5, this would indicate that most respondents had stated that the relationship remained unchanged. It can be seen from the table of group means, that in every trial most respondents stated that the

relationship remained unchanged. What is interesting however is that in the first and second interviews, the tendency was for those who reported a change in their relationship to state that the change was positive (that is the group mean was greater than two), while in the third and fourth interview, the tendency was for those who reported a change to perceive the change as being negative (the group mean was less than two). While this pattern of change accounted for a significant amount of variance ( $F = 2.85$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ), the Newman Keuls procedure failed to identify any significant differences between individual pairs of sample means. Thus it cannot be stated unequivocally that after four months (that is, after the second interview), there is a deterioration in the relationship.

There was no significant difference in the frequency of visiting over the period of the longitudinal study ( $F = 1.24$ ,  $p = 0.31$ ), nor was there a difference in respondents attitudes towards the visiting arrangements ( $F = 0.93$ ,  $p = 0.43$ ). There was a significant difference over the twelve month period concerning whether the respondents felt able to discuss problems and feelings at visits. Table 9.7 displays the sample means obtained from each of the four interviews with regard to this item.

TABLE 9.7 SAMPLE MEANS OBTAINED FROM EACH OF THE FOUR INTERVIEWS:

ARE YOU ABLE TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS AND FEELINGS WITH YOUR  
HUSBAND AT VISITS?

TRIAL	1	2	3	4
SAMPLE MEANS	1.63	1.41	1.00	0.875

This item was scored on an ordinal scale as follows; zero = stopped visiting, one = no, two = yes. Thus the if the sample mean is nearer to two, this indicates that most respondents are able to discuss emotions and problems. If the sample mean is nearer to one, this indicates that most of the sample are unable to discuss feelings and problems. If the sample mean is less than one, this indicates that some of the sample have stopped visiting. It can be seen then that the ability to express feelings and discuss problems diminished steadily over the twelve month period, until the fourth interview where some of the sample had stopped visiting the spouse. The Newman Keuls procedure failed to identify any significant differences between each individual pair of sample means however.

It would seem then that there may have been some deterioration in the relationship between the respondents and their partners over the twelve month study period. This was manifest in statements to that effect by respondents and a reported decrease in the

quality of interaction at visits. There was however no overall decrease in the frequency of visiting by the women.

#### 9.2.6 Changes In Other Problem Areas Over The Four Interviews

There were no significant differences between the four interviews regarding the women's health, nor with respect to their use of and attitudes towards institutional help. It appears that the majority of the women, did not use social work departments at the beginning of the longitudinal study period, and continued not to use them throughout the twelve month period. The overwhelmingly negative attitude towards social work held by the sample at the beginning of the twelve month period, was maintained throughout the period of the study. The comment from one woman that, 'They are just busybodies who want to get you into the system. Once they know about you, they are never away from your door', or from another respondents who expressed fear that if social workers knew she was having problems this would affect the husband's chance of parole success would seem to exemplify attitudes towards social work held by the majority of respondents.

#### 9.3 SUMMARY; CHANGES IN THE SITUATION OF THE RESPONDENTS OVER THE TWELVE MONTH PERIOD.

Perhaps the most notable feature of the findings from the longitudinal study is the lack of change in the circumstances of the respondents over the twelve month period. There were very

few changes in the actual situation in the areas of finance, children, family and social relationships, social circumstances, health and use of social work.

It is the case, however that those respondents who stated that they were not anxious at the beginning of the study period, were likely to state that they were not anxious at the end of the period, while those respondents who expressed anxiety in the first interview were likely to express a lesser degree of anxiety at the fourth interview. It would appear then, that if anxiety is going to be engendered by the spouse's imprisonment, this will happen early, and may reduce to some extent as time progresses. There are also indications that anxiety about specific problem areas may be part of a generalised anxiety, which reduces independently of any change in specific problem areas.

Finally it would appear from the data that there may have been some degree of deterioration in the relationship between the woman and her partner over the course of the course of the study period. This was manifest in statements from respondents, and a reported decrease in the quality of the interaction between the woman and her spouse at visits.

#### 9.4 LIMITATIONS TO THE LONGITUDINAL STUDY

Perhaps the most obvious limitation to this part of the overall study is that only respondents whose spouses were at the beginning of a long sentence were selected. This might be seen to have a particular potential for the introduction of error, given the findings in earlier chapters that an interaction between length and stage of sentence were of major importance in accounting for variance in the data set. Because of the use of one homogeneous group, it would be difficult to extrapolate from these findings to the main sample. A further practical problem which might be a source of error in this study lies in the fact that even when those respondents whose spouse had been in prison for more than twelve months were excluded, the time span from one day to twelve months is still a fairly gross classification for the purposes of subject matching. Within this cell one can find respondents whose spouse had been in prison only weeks. Equally, however, one can find a respondent whose spouse had been in prison for up to twelve months. Thus while there may be problems for error reduction in the homogeneity of the sub - sample relative to the whole sample, there may also be problems of heterogeneity within the group which could as easily account for error within the data.

The ideal would obviously involve a long term longitudinal study which incorporated all sentence lengths and picked people up



immediately after the spouse's sentence was imposed. However, even if this was feasible, the logistics, given limited time and resources would be formidable.

PART V

DISCUSSION CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## CHAPTER TEN

### DISCUSSION OF SAMPLE IN THE LIGHT OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

#### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the objectives of this study was to derive some up to date empirical knowledge of the problems which the imprisonment of the spouse engenders for the remaining family members. As pointed out in Chapter Five, There is a general consensus that the imprisonment of a spouse generates a range of problems and needs which, historically, has not been met. In this chapter, it is intended to examine these problem areas in the light of the findings of this study, and to discuss these with reference to the findings of previous studies.

#### 10.2 THE COMPONENTS OF THE PROBLEM

##### 10.2.1 Financial Problems

As discussed in chapter five, it was typically found that money worries constituted one of the major problem areas for the woman whose spouse is imprisoned. From the earliest research which found that families of men in prison were 'scarcely able to eke out a living', (Goodblood 1928), to Morris's 1965 finding that families were living under extreme poverty, this conclusion seems to be perennial and not affected by national boundaries. In this study, it was found that within the whole sample, 65% of the

respondents reported some degree of financial hardship, or financial problems. This figure concurs broadly with the findings from a number of earlier studies, for example that of Daniel and Barrat,(1965), in which 70% of the respondents reported having one or more financial difficulties. In a UK context, West Glamorgan Probation Team found in 1980, that 19 out of 30, ( i.e 63%) of their respondents, were having financial problems at the time of being interviewed. It would appear then that for many women whose husband's have been imprisoned, management of their income is still a potentially serious problem, and that, in spite of both social and legislative changes, little had changed for this group in terms of finance over the previous thirty years and more. It may also be, that a further source of stress for the individual, apart from the reduction in family income would be the necessity to assume the role of the person with sole responsibility for the financial welfare of the family. The need to attend social security offices in order to make a new claim for benefit, often for the first time was commonly cited as a source of anxiety among the respondents in the present study.

While Morris,(1965), found that there was little difference between what she termed 'Star' prisoners', (i.e first offenders) families and 'Recidivist' prisoners' families in the degree of financial problems encountered, none of the previous studies have systematically examined differences which might occur as a result

of length and / or stage of sentence. In the present study, it was found that neither the length nor the stage of the sentence had any major effect upon the frequency of reported financial problems, and that even in the longest sentences there did not appear to be any improvement in the respondents financial situation between stages of sentence

.This might be seen to be somewhat surprising given the reduction in other problem areas over the course of an individuals sentence. It may very well be, however, that the population of prisoners families is, in the main, among the more financially marginal in society in any event, and therefore absolute measures of financial hardship may be somewhat independent of the spouse's imprisonment. It should also be borne in mind that the majority of the sample, (80%, at the time of the husband's imprisonment), were in receipt of benefit. One scenario which was particularly commonly reported, was that after the man was imprisoned, the woman's benefit was reduced to reflect the married couple's allowance, minus a sum equivalent to the husband's portion of the married couple's allowance. That is, the woman did not receive the same level of benefit which a single woman with the same number of children would receive. Thus, at the beginning of the sentence, the benefit available to the woman for the upkeep of the family, may be reduced by a substantial amount, irrespective of the length of the sentence. Given the low and unchanging real level of benefit relative to the cost of living, it is unlikely

that, except in the case of radically changed circumstances, the woman's perception of financial difficulties would change substantially over the course of the sentence.

What did change quite dramatically over the course of the sentence was the degree of anxiety engendered by the financial problems the woman was encountering. In this area, earlier studies found that financial problems generate anxiety in a number of different ways. the natural anxiety about not having enough money to live on, anxiety about having to deal with welfare agencies, perhaps for the first time, (Morris, 1965, Monger and Pendleton, 1972, West Glamorgan Probation Service, 1980, etc. There is also the anxiety commonly felt about the return of the husband to take up the financial reins often just when the woman has adapted to the situation, (Liker 1981, Anderson 1867). In the present study, it was found that as many as 83% of the respondents expressed anxiety about their financial situation, but that this proportion reduced over the course of the husband's sentence, until the end stage where 43% of respondents were still anxious. None of the previous studies examined this reduction in anxiety to any extent, and neither did they examine whether it was those women who felt most in control who were most anxious about the return of their spouse. Certainly as pointed out above there was a reduction of reported anxiety found in the present study, and there was also a reduction in the degree of anxiety between the sentence groups,

and there are indications that anxiety as a result of anticipating the return of the spouse was greatest among those women who scored most highly on the perceived control factor. These findings will be discussed in the context of theories of stress, anxiety and control in the next chapter. For the present, it is sufficient to point out that although anxiety as a possible stress response reduced as the sentence progressed, it may be that the responses themselves acted as potential stressors, engendering further anxiety in the individual.

One interesting finding was that a large proportion of the respondents attempted to deal with the stress of financial problems by obtaining employment. This is particularly surprising given the particular time at which the interviews were being conducted. In the mid - 1980s societal unemployment was particularly high. This together with the added handicaps of young children, and returning to work after a period of not being employed, would perhaps lead one to expect that the respondents would find employment difficult to secure. Yet, even in the beginning of sentence group, one respondent in five had secured employment since the spouse's imprisonment, and by the end stage this proportion was one respondent in two. These figures may be compared with figures presented in the study by West Glamorgan Probation Service. In that study the number of respondents who were in full time employment was three out of a sample of thirty, (10%). It should be noted however, that in the present study,

there is no indication as to the type of employment which the respondents have secured. It should also be noted that for the majority of the sample, employment was not an option they had chosen, or were able to take up. For this majority, dependence upon welfare benefits was apparently seen to be the only option. One final point of interest (in that it may indicate policy and cultural factors which impinge upon investigators and influence the ways in which they interpret the data), concerns the conclusion arrived at by Schneller in 1975 reported that, in a US context, the provision of welfare largely kept economic hardship in check. It would be interesting to speculate whether the respondents in that study took the same absolutist view of poverty. Schneller's conclusion would probably not be shared by many of the workers in this field in Britain, nor perhaps by the respondents in this study, most of whom had suffered a decrease in an already normatively low standard of living.

#### 10.2.2 Problems With The Children

This study found that, regarding the reported effects upon children of the father's imprisonment, very little had changed since the earlier British studies were conducted. In common with Morris's findings, this study found that respondents commonly attempted to withhold the truth about the husband's absence from the children. This would seem to be a temporary measure since by the end of the sentence the majority had told the child the truth. It does seem however, that while this subterfuge was



being conducted, it might engender more stress for the woman to little ultimate profit.

Again, the finding that a proportion of respondents reported that the children had heard others outside the home speak about the father's imprisonment mirrored findings in Morris's work. Indeed, Morris found a degree of anger among respondents at how other children had treated theirs as a result of the father's imprisonment. In the present study, however, it was found that the majority of such instances involved adult members of the extended family, and indeed there seemed to be only one case where overt malice was involved in such a disclosure (This incident is recounted in Chapter seven). It would appear however that what might be an inadvertent disclosure of the facts, or the child overhearing a conversation is often construed by the woman as being a deliberate or uncaring act. This would seem to be linked to Davies' (1982) findings that there is a confusion between 'stigma', (that is the actual experience of people acting in a hostile manner towards an individual because that individual's spouse is in prison), and 'shame', (that is the emotion felt as a result of society's general stigmatisation of the concept of imprisonment). The latter, it would be expected, would lead the individual to expect to be stigmatised, or perceive others actions as stigmatising, even when, objectively, they may not be.

Morris (1965), suggested that it is perhaps among the children that one might expect to find the impact of the father's separation and / or criminality to be present. However, it appears that Morris found it impossible to distinguish between the effects of separation as a result of imprisonment and separation as a result of other potentially traumatic events. This has been found by subsequent research both in the area of parental imprisonment and in other areas, (e.g Friedman and Essilstyn, (1965), Sack, (1977), McCord et al (1962)) It is noteworthy, that in those studies where a relationship was found between parental offending and children's delinquency, (e.g, West and Farrington, (1979)), there were other concomitant variables which could equally account for variance. In summary, the literature would suggest that traumatic separation of parents and children, in common with other types of disruption of family functioning may have a generalised negative effect upon the child. There is not, however, any unequivocal evidence of a specific or unique relationship between parental offending and subsequent juvenile offending, or indeed any other specific negative outcome.

In the present study, it was found that much of the children's behavioural problems was attributed to the father's imprisonment, rather than other factors such as the child's age and the 'normal' problems of childhood and adolescence. It is interesting however that expressed anxiety about the children's

behaviour seems to reduce as the sentence progresses. This might suggest that the children adapt to the father's absence as time progresses and that their behaviour 'returns to normal'. Other findings may tend to cast doubt on this proposition as being the sole reason for the decrease in reports of behavioural problems being a result of the father's imprisonment. The highest proportion of reports of behavioural problems which were attributed to the father's imprisonment, and also the highest level of expressed anxiety about the effect of the father's imprisonment upon the children, were made by the most anxious respondents (i.e. those scoring most highly on the 'general anxiety' factor scale). This might suggest that a high level of general anxiety affects her perception of the effect of the father's absence on the children's behaviour. Another piece of evidence might support a proposition that attribution for children's behaviour to the spouse's imprisonment may be a function of the woman's expectations and interpretation of events. While there was a significant difference between the high anxiety group and the low anxiety group on the amount of anxiety about the children, and the observed effect of the husbands imprisonment on the child, there was no such difference between the groups on more objective criteria such as school reports police reports etc. Thus the more subjective reports were attributed to parental imprisonment by anxious subjects, but the more objective reports were not.

While it is argued above that increased anxiety about the effect of the spouse's imprisonment may make the woman 'hypervigilant' to anything which can be blamed on the event, this does not imply an attempt to deny the objective fact that the woman is to an almost total extent, left to deal with behavioural problems in her children by herself, and often without help from either formal caring agencies or informal social networks. What is being argued is that this objective reality is often exacerbated by the anxieties that the woman has, and she may subsequently see any behavioural problems as being more shameful or stigmatising, and thus more distressing, than if she perceived the problems as being as a result of the husband being absent for other reasons, such as work or being in hospital. Thus it is feasible that the actual problem of the effect of the husband's imprisonment upon the child is, at least in part the product of an interaction between the child's behaviour and the mother's interpretation of and reaction to that behaviour. Any deterioration in the child's behaviour may initially be because of a negative reaction to the fathers imprisonment. However, the woman's reaction to this behaviour while being distressing in itself, may also affect further, the child's behaviour. The woman's anxiety about the child's behaviour may be further heightened and so on.

#### 10.2.3 Family Relationships

The literature indicates that the respondents family plays an important role in helping to ameliorate the effects of the

husband's imprisonment. In the present study a large majority of respondents reported having a positive relationship with their own family. The respondents in this study also offered the assessment of their family as a potential source of help. Both of these findings are consonant with previous British studies of spouse imprisonment (Morris 1965, West Glamorgan Probation Service 1982). Schwartz and Weintraub (1974) indicated however that often the wife's family turned against the husband and this was the cause of friction between the wife and her family. While this is not reported in Morris' study, and is reported as not having been observed in the West Glamorgan study, a similar phenomenon was observed in the present study. While the difference was not significant at the 0.05 level in this study, it was observed that as a result of the spouse's imprisonment, the relationship between the wife and her own family deteriorated in a large minority of cases. While there was no case where the relationship deteriorated to the point of estrangement, it was reported by a number of respondents that the family's negative reaction to the husband had caused some friction between the wife and her family. As a counterweight, there was a small number of respondents who had a good relationship even though the family were estranged from the spouse. It may be that in this case, any potential friction between the wife's family and herself, through her husband was being postponed until the husband's return.

The literature is almost unanimous in finding that the major pattern observed in the relationship between the wife and her in-laws is the reverse of that observed with the wife and her own parents. If this were the case, then it would mean that a potential source of help and support was closed to the wife when she needed it most. In addition to this, any continuing hostility between the wife and her in-laws while the spouse was in prison, might act as a further source of stress to the wife and might also be a source of tension between the wife and her spouse. In view of the common nature of this finding, it is perhaps surprising that the present study found that the majority of the respondents (74%) enjoyed a positive relationship with their in-laws. indeed, the only difference found between the relationship the respondents had with their own family, and that which they had with their in-laws was that they were more likely to see their own family as a source of help. Even here it was reported by 52% of the sample that they saw their in-laws as potential sources of help. Thus in this sample, the in-laws, far from being a potential source of further stress, were seen as being an asset by most of the respondents.

#### 10.2.4 Relationships With Others In The Community

Some of the literature highlights social isolation as a common phenomenon among prisoners wives ( Morris and Tomlinson (1972), Howlett 1972) ), although several studies have indicated that

friends and neighbours were well - intentioned and supportive (Morris (1965), West Glamorgan Probation Service (1982).

In the present study, it was found that the vast majority of the respondents reported having one or more close friendships, and that these friendships seemed to be maintained throughout the sentence. Thus these findings seem to concur with the latter group of studies. Regarding neighbours, however, it appears that in the present study neighbours were generally seen as being indifferent, and reacting in neither a positive nor a negative manner. Essentially then, there was little difference between how family, in - laws, and friends reacted to the respondents, but that neighbours were seen as being much less involved in the situation. This phenomenon may be understood perhaps in that while family and friends may perceive themselves as having an emotional investment in the woman, and a duty towards her, whom one's neighbours are, is largely fortuitous, having neither been chosen nor choosing to live beside one. It is not surprising, therefore, that they would be less involved with the respondents than family, friends or in - laws.

The social isolation highlighted in the literature may be understood in terms of a reaction to perceived stigma. Vercoe (1970), describes 'an ill - defined hostility', towards families of prisoners, and Brodsky discusses stigma as hostility and lessened respect for the family. There is a wealth of literature

citing stigma as a factor in the experience of spouse imprisonment. In the present study, anxiety about perceived stigma was a factor for the majority of respondents, and did not seem to abate much over the course of the sentence. There was no indication of a lack of anxiety about stigma as a result of a crime tolerant atmosphere within the woman's social circle, despite the fact that this has been found in a number of studies (Schneller (1975), Bays ( )

Perhaps surprisingly anxiety regarding stigma also seemed to be independent of the seriousness of the offence, (if seriousness is reflected in sentence length), and of the objective reality of the situation. It appeared that anxiety persisted in spite of the fact that with the exception of one case, nothing of an objective nature was reported by the sample which would reinforce this fear of being stigmatised. It does seem then that this anxiety may be part of a general anxiety about the spouse's imprisonment which is independent of much of the objective reality of the situation.

#### 10.2.5 Social Relationships.

If a social withdrawal such as observed by Brodsky was to occur, then it is likely that it would occur in the area of the woman's



social life. In the present study, it was found that 90% of the sample had witnessed their social life deteriorating after the husband's imprisonment, and that manifestations of this deterioration included; fewer people coming to the house, avoiding places where the respondent and her husband went to previously because of a fear of stigma, and drinking alone at home rather than in company. It does appear therefore that a fairly large degree of social withdrawal takes place after the husband's imprisonment. A proportion of respondents saw The change in their social life as being initially a deterioration, and subsequently a return to a previous level of social functioning, or indeed, an improvement. Among the possible reasons for this may be that as Brodsky discusses, the woman withdraws from social interaction initially as a result of anxiety or guilt, and expectations of hostility on the part of others. As time progresses, she may perceive that there has not been as much reaction as expected, or indeed her general level of anxiety is reduced, and she may re - establish her social activities. This proposition is supported to some extent by a definite but non - significant trend towards a reduction in anxiety about entering social situations which was found among the respondents.

#### 10.2.6 Relationship With The Spouse.

It appears that the practical, emotional structural and administrative constraints imposed upon the woman and her spouse prejudice the chances of the couple maintaining their relationship unscathed throughout the man's sentence. There is a lot of evidence to suggest that many relationships do not survive in a healthy state (Morris (1965), Brodsky (1975), NACRO (1975)), and that there is an almost linear relationship between the probability of a breakdown of the marriage and the length of time the man is in prison. It is certainly the case in the present study, that, regarding perceived changes in the relationship, equal proportions saw the relationship as having deteriorated or improved, and a slightly larger proportion saw it as having remained the same. What is interesting is that in the whole sample, the proportion of people who reported an improvement in the relationship increased as the sentence progressed. This was accompanied by a corresponding decrease in the proportions who reported their relationship as having stayed the same. The proportion who reported a deterioration in their relationship stayed stable over the course of the sentence.

This would seem to contradict the assertion by, for example, Holt and Miller, and Rossi et al, that, the marital relationship deteriorates as the years pass. Indeed it might be speculated that this finding is more in line with the findings of Hill, who studied army families, that very few marital breakdowns occur

during the husband's absence, which did not pre - date the separation. Hill, in fact, found that those couples who divorced and blamed it upon the separation caused by the husband's military service had invariably had periods of estrangement before the man's military service.

It should be noted that in the present study, in those cases where respondents did report a deterioration in the relationship, the number of cases which ultimately ended in the respondent reporting that the relationship was over was striking. It would appear then, that in cases of deterioration, the situation may often become so bad that the relationship often ends before the spouse's return to the family. Interestingly, findings from the longitudinal study in the present work, suggest that a deterioration in the relationship between the woman and her partner may take place in a fairly short period of time. It was found in this part of the study among a sub - sample of women, all of whom had a spouse in the early stages of a long sentence, that for a number of respondents, there was a discernible deterioration in the relationship with the spouse within the first third of the sentence. This was manifest in negative statements regarding the relationship, and a perceived decrease in the quality of the interaction between the couple at visits.

#### 10.2.7 Maintaining Contact With The Spouse.

In spite of the fact that visits and letters are the only ways

the couple have of maintaining their relationship while the man is in prison, it would appear that the respondents in the present study held views on both the visiting facilities and the mail system which were predominantly negative.

Earlier empirical work would tend to confirm that the methods of communication open to prisoners and their families do very little to facilitate the maintenance of a close confiding relationship between the man and his family (e.g, Monger and Pendleton (1976), Brodsky (1975), Morris (1965), Rosenkrantz and Joshua), and at least one commentator would argue that this is not the function of prison visits (Levi (1971)). These findings would seem to be corroborated by the present study. Two thirds of all respondents expressed negative sentiments about the prison visiting arrangements, and slightly more than 40% of respondents reported being caused distress about some aspect of the visiting experience at some point during the spouse's sentence. Causes of these negative experiences included taking the children to the prison, children's misbehaviour at visits, travelling, children's distress at visits, and the spouse's distress at the visit. A small number of respondents made reference to the degrading nature of the visiting facilities and the attitude of prison staff, as causes of distress.

The physical environment of the visits and the emotional strain, might make it difficult for the couple maintain any worthwhile

degree of closeness in visits. Indeed, Anderson's Australian Study, noted that few respondents were able to discuss problems with their husbands in the visiting situation, and this is again reflected, albeit to a lesser extent, in the present study. Half the respondents in the present study felt that they could not discuss feelings or problems with the spouse at visits. This is important in the light of the literature, (e.g Hill, (1971), which points to the level of communication and expressed emotion between partners as being predictive of good adjustment to a family crisis.

It would appear that one of the major problems for many women, at least in the early stages of the spouse's sentence is the unfamiliarity of the prison system and the procedures for dealing with it. Empirical work would suggest that difficulties are experienced as a result of a lack of basic information regarding, for example, terminology, the different regimes and security categories, where the husband will be and for how long, the procedures for contacting the husband, etc. (Daniels and Barrat (1981), Schartz and Weintraub (1974). The link between anxiety, control and for information will be discussed in the next chapter, but it is interesting to note that in the present study, 42% of respondents felt that they had no control, over the visiting situation, and 58% felt that they had slight control. By the end of the sentence, the proportion who perceived

themselves to have no control had reduced to 17%, and 7% perceived themselves to be very much in control.

Thus, the only means of personal contact, and perhaps of maintaining the relationship, open to the woman and her partner was seen in a negative light, was cited as a cause of distress, and was not felt to be conducive to a meaningful interaction by about half the sample. In spite of these negative aspects of visiting, however, 89% of the sample visited their partner in prison, and 58% overall, visited regularly. In addition to this, it was felt by the majority of respondents that visits were important if the relationship between the woman and her partner was to be sustained.

#### 10.2.8 Relationships With Social Work

One particularly stark finding was that in spite of the problems and anxieties which the respondents experienced, they did not seek social work support and were generally negative towards institutionalised helping agencies. It is unclear why this should be so, but one predicament faced by the women would seem to be that for many social workers within prisons, the 'client' was essentially the man, and the social work task was essentially keeping the family together until the man was released. Thus the woman may perceive herself to be defined as something of an 'appendage' to the man's problems. In addition, if the woman seeks help from the local social work office, she may find that

pressure on local area teams means that her problem is not a priority case. Unless one falls within certain strictly defined criteria, (i.e unless one is defined as being a 'statutory' case), then one is dealt with under the generic Section 12 of the 1968, Social Work (Scotland) Act. Black, Robertson and Stephenson (1983), found that social work in this context may of necessity be seen as 'elastic' or 'inelastic', the latter being work which is done on a priority basis, and is confined to statutory cases, and the former being work which is done 'as possible', and is composed mainly of cases which are defined in terms of 'promoting social welfare', (i.e section 12 cases). Thus even if the woman does seek help, while she may receive what help can be given in the circumstances, this may not be seen to be enough.

### 10.3 Factors Which Affect The Problem

More than 75% of the variance in the data was accounted for by a relatively small sub - group of variables. These variables were ultimately grouped into factors which appear, in the light of previous literature to have some theoretical meaningfulness. Two of the factors; General Anxiety and Perceived Control seemed to have a major effect upon the data, and they seem to affect almost every aspect of the respondents' experiences of spouse imprisonment. These will be discussed in Chapter Eleven. One of the other three factors, Locus of Coping Strategy, did not on its own seem to account for much of the variance in the data set.

As discussed in Chapter Eight, however, it seemed to be fairly highly associated with General Anxiety. The other two factors, Spouse History, and Attitude To Communication With Spouse, had a generally smaller effect than anxiety or control. These will be discussed in this section.

#### 10.3.1 The Role Of The Spouse's History

The first thing which was shown up was that those respondents whose husbands experienced disruption in their lives as a consequence of their husband's behaviour, were more likely to see their children as having behavioural problems. They also tended to see their relationship with the family as having changed for the worse. and the relationship with in - laws as not having changed, but as negative nonetheless. It may be then, that this group who had, prior to this episode, experienced more disruption to their lives as a result of the husband's behaviour had in fact experienced negative consequences prior to this episode, also. If this were the case, then it may be that they expected to experience further negative consequences as a result of the present episode of imprisonment. The possibility also exists that the effects of such disruption are cumulative and that the woman's life is more disorganised than others for whom this is a first offence.

Those respondents whose spouses had more disorganised histories were more likely to see the relationship with their spouse as



having deteriorated, and were less likely to visit the spouse. In summary, it appears that the more disorganised the spouse's history, the greater the problems for the female partner when he is imprisoned, and the more negative she is about the relationship.

#### 10.3.2 The role Of The Woman's Attitude To Communication With The Spouse

This factor accounted for variance in only one area. The less favourable the woman's attitude to visits and letters, the less she is able to have a meaningful interaction with the spouse at visits. Further to this, these women are more likely to report that their relationship had deteriorated. This would seem to reinforce the earlier literature that frequency of contact and the ability to discuss problems and emotions are both predictive of good adjustment.

#### 10.4 The Role Of Length Of Sentence.

It was expected that the length of the sentence and how long the spouse had served of the sentence would have a major influence upon the type of problems being encountered, their severity, and the way in which these problems were reacted to. In the event, it did transpire that this was the case. however, the

relationship was less clear - cut than expected. It appeared that the length of sentence in isolation had almost no effect upon any problem area. Thus the group of respondents whose spouses were serving short sentences were very little different in terms of type and severity of problems from the group whose spouses were serving long sentences. When the cumulative effects of length of sentence and stage of sentence were considered, however, it was seen that they accounted for more variance than each of the two in isolation.

One plausible reason for this might become clear by accepting that each event has an objective and a subjective component, and to a large extent the woman's experience is based upon the interaction of these components. Objectively, it may be that having one's spouse sent to prison is an event which engenders problems and a degree of anxiety. Subjectively, however, it is unlikely that an individual will consider her own problems and anxiety and assess how much more anxious she would have been if the objective event had been fifty per cent worse. Nor is it likely that the woman will compare her level of anxiety with some hypothetical other person whose spouse is serving a sentence which is twice as long as her spouse's. Thus it may be that at the beginning of the sentence, if one is asked how serious are problems on a four point scale, the answer will be 'four', whatever the objective seriousness of the stressor. As the sentence proceeds, however, the woman develops a series of

reference points to which she can relate her subjective perception of problems or feelings of anxiety. That is she can relate how she feels at present to how she felt at the beginning of the sentence, at the halfway stage, etc., and provide a subjective assessment in that way. It would seem reasonable then, to suggest that neither how long a person has served in absolute terms, nor how long a person has to serve in absolute terms, will have as great an effect on the perception of problems as how long a person has served, when viewed in terms of how long the person still has to serve.

The subjective aspects of the problem and how it is dealt with will be discussed in fuller detail in the next chapter

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### STRESS AND ANXIETY

#### 11.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the nature of the interaction between the objective reality of spouse imprisonment and the individual's subjective experience of the event was introduced. In the present chapter, it is intended to discuss this interaction with reference to the concepts of stress, anxiety and coping. It is difficult in practice, or indeed in theoretical terms, to separate these phenomena, given the interaction between them. For example, many laboratory studies operationalise stress as being the presence of anxiety contingent on an event. Further, Mandler (1972), understood anxiety to be synonymous with helplessness, and a host of studies, reviewed in Chapter Four support the contention that loss of control may be stressful or anxiety provoking. While this may be the case, it is intended in this chapter to discuss these concepts sequentially.

#### 11.2 STRESS

It was proposed in Chapter One that for the purposes of the present study, the interactional definition offered by Cox (1978), be accepted as having utility for conceptualising stress. This definition within

which stress is seen as a perceptual phenomenon arising from the demand made on the individual and her perceived ability to cope, would seem, comfortably, to encompass the experience of spouse imprisonment. Even a cursory examination of the data would confirm that spouse imprisonment may comprise many of the stressors identified in the literature. For example Lazarus (1976), identified perceived threat as being a primary stressor, as did Weitz (1970). The latter author also identified isolation and group pressure as important stressors, and Frankenhauser (1975), found that lack of control was an important factor in the perception of an event as stressful. One implication of Cox's definition of stress is that not everyone will experience the same phenomena as being stressful, and indeed that the same person, encountering the same phenomenon, may experience different levels of stress at different times. This second point would seem to be illustrated by the finding in the present study that the interaction between length and stage of the spouse's sentence has a major effect upon the perceived severity of problems and the expressed anxiety about these problems. This leads, perhaps, to the conclusion that it would be erroneous to conceptualise spouse imprisonment as some kind of unitary problem with a set of generic solutions. It would seem to be

more realistic to adopt a more phenomenological, or individualised approach.

#### 11.2.1 ONE STRESSOR OR MORE THAN ONE?

The argument outlined above is perhaps made more complex by the fact that, from the data, it can be seen that even the 'experience of spouse imprisonment' may more accurately be described as a series of events engendered by the initial event. Each of these events has the potential to be perceived as a discrete stressful experience by the woman, and furthermore, as discussed in Chapter One, each of the stress responses also has the potential to be stress provoking in its turn. Thus while the majority of the sample seemed to experience some degree of general anxiety in response to the spouse's imprisonment, a number experienced anxiety only about particular aspects of the situation. Even among those respondents who expressed anxiety about the situation as a whole, the levels of anxiety relating to the different problem areas differed both within individuals at different times, and between individuals. This might be accounted for by the concept of 'salience' of a particular potentially stressful situation, described by McGrath (1974, 1976), and Lazarus (1976), and which was discussed in Chapter Two.

#### 11.2.2 DEMAND AND CAPACITY

Lowe and McGrath (1971), and McGrath (1976), postulated that the closer perceived demand is to perceived capacity, the greater would be the stress engendered by the situation, and Welford (1973), proposed that under conditions of moderate demand, task performance may, in fact, be enhanced. These propositions were not completely supported in this study. There was some slight tendency on a few variables for those respondents whose husband had a longer history of offending to be more anxious than naive respondents, which might suggest that these respondents having practiced coping were less certain that they could not cope, and were therefore more anxious. However, for the vast majority of respondents in the initial stages of the event, few significant differences in the level of anxiety were identified when the sample was split in terms of sentence length, and number of previous episodes of spouse imprisonment.

As discussed in the previous chapter, evidence from this study would suggest that in the initial stages of experiencing a stressful event, the individual may not have reference points which enable her to assess whether the demand is moderate or severe. This may, in those cases where the experience is completely novel,

or the individual perceives herself as having failed to cope in previous similar situations, be compounded by the fact that the individual does not know what her capacities for coping are. Indeed, Spielberger (1972), maintains that anxiety occurs when an individual encounters a situation with which she is not familiar, which she does not understand, and / or which she perceives as being threatening from previous experience. This would seem to encompass both naive respondents and experienced respondents. Thus, in the situation of spouse imprisonment, (and perhaps in many other stressful situations) it may be that most woman, at least in the initial stages, perceive the event to be catastrophic, and the certainty in this situation may be that the individual does not have the capacities to cope. Indeed, This would differ in an essential manner from crisis theory, the central tenet of which is that the more novel and / or unfamiliar an event is perceived to be, the greater the probability of it being perceived as a crisis. Crisis theory would also predict that experiencing a crisis would increase the probability of being able to successfully cope with the subsequent crises.

### 11.3. ANXIETY



#### 11.3.1 .Reduction Of Anxiety With Time

Both crisis theory and theories of stress, reviewed in chapters one and two, would postulate that anxiety is engendered as a reaction to experiencing a stressful event or circumstance. Both of these classes of theory would also postulate that stress responses such as anxiety can often interfere with performance of coping tasks, and this is corroborated by a large body of literature. However, one of the major differences between theories of stress and crisis theory, is that while stress theories would not predict that anxiety as a stress response inevitably reduces with chronological distance from the stress provoking event, crisis theories, in the main, postulate that crises are time limited and individuals will inevitably adopt a range of coping strategies. Consequently, anxiety as a response will be extinguished.

As discussed briefly in section 11.2, it was found in the present study that a 'general anxiety' factor accounted for a large proportion of the variance in the perception of problems and the reaction to them, and that this effect was apparent across the whole spectrum of problem areas. It was found that while the degree of 'general anxiety' was influenced by the amount of time the respondent's spouse had been in prison, the

effect was greater when the length of sentence was taken into account. This would suggest that while the absolute chronological distance from the event is a factor in reducing anxiety, the length of time since the commencement of the event relative to the length of time until its perceived end is of more importance in accounting for expressed anxiety.

#### 11.3.2 Anxiety And Arousal

In general terms it was found that those respondents who scored highest on the general anxiety factor reported having more problems than those who attained lower scores on the anxiety factor. Further to this, the findings reported in Chapters Eight and Nine would indicate that as anxiety in one specific problem area reduces, so does anxiety in other specific problem areas. A third piece of evidence from a number of findings from the present study would suggest that anxiety expressed by respondents in relation to specific problem areas which are salient to them, may in fact be linked to a generalised anxiety about the whole situation. For example, it was noted that within the high anxiety group, the objective problem in a number of problem areas, appeared not to change over the period of study, while anxiety about the specific problem area reduced much in line with the reduction in

scores on the generalised anxiety factor. In addition, it was found that reports of behavioural problems in the children, which could be viewed as being somewhat objective, for example police reports, social work and school reports, etc, reduced as time went on. There was, however, no corresponding decrease in expressed anxiety about less objective observations of problems with the child, for example, the respondents' anxieties about the general effect of the father's imprisonment upon the child.

There is therefore, a substantial amount of evidence that the anxiety expressed regarding specific problem areas is in fact highly interrelated with the initial anxiety experienced as a result of the spouse's imprisonment, and may be quite independent of changes in the the objective burden placed upon the woman. This may be explained by the proposition that the general anxiety experienced by the women as a result of the spouse's imprisonment increases the woman's arousal, i.e heightened awareness of danger, thus making her more vigilant to negative changes in the environment. While most laboratory studies operationalise anxiety in terms of increased arousal, Epstein (1971) made a distinction between arousal and anxiety per se, arguing that increased arousal over a

long period may in fact be a trigger for further anxiety. Thus, arousal may not merely be a manifestation of anxiety but also a cause of further anxiety. In summary, the woman's anxiety would raise her level of arousal, making her hypervigilant to negative changes in her situation, and thus engendering further anxiety. If the above proposition is correct, then as general anxiety decreases, so too would the woman's level of arousal, and her hypervigilance to negative changes in her situation. This might be perceived by the woman as a reduction in the level of anxiety about specific problem areas, and this would be observed to be independent of actual changes in the objective problem. Such a decrease in arousal would therefore increase the likelihood of further decreasing anxiety.

#### 11.4 STRESS ANXIETY AND CONTROL

##### 11.4.1 Perceived Control And Level Of Coping

While the findings in the present study might indicate that whether or not a person perceives herself to be in control has little direct effect upon the level of problems she experiences, there is a large body of literature, (reviewed in Chapter Four), which focuses on loss of control as a factor in the origins and

maintenance of anxiety. Certainly, results from the present study would strongly indicate that there is a relationship between the factors, General Anxiety and Perceived Control, which were identified by principal components analysis. Low control respondents were found to be more anxious than high control respondents in many problem areas. These included finance, children's problems, and social relationships. In addition, low control respondents were like high anxiety respondents in that they were more likely to attempt to use internal resources in order to cope with problems they encountered. This latter finding would seem to raise something of a paradox. It has been postulated (Rotter 1966) that people with an internal locus of control would be more likely to feel themselves to be more in control and would therefore be less anxious. It might be thought therefore that the finding of 'internal' respondents to be more anxious than 'externals' is somewhat puzzling. However, if Bandura's (1977) work and that of Mann and Janis (1977) is taken into account, then the situation may make more sense. Bandura postulates that expectancies are major determinants of whether a particular course of action will be undertaken. In addition, it was argued by Bandura that if an individual expects to attain a given goal which is objectively unattainable, then they are

likely to suffer costs in terms of needless failure, and resultant stress. It is possible, then that in the present study, those respondents who repeatedly attempt to solve problems without going to others for help may suffer more anxiety as a result of repeated failure. This would be the case, particularly when the goal is not objectively attainable or is beyond the capabilities of the individual.

This of course raises the question of how the individual, in the face of repeated failure, maintains a perception of the desirability of using internal resources to solve problems. An account based upon motivation as viewed by theorists such as Rotter, Langer and others would emphasise either the desire to avoid the negative consequences accompanying a belief in no control, or a desire to enhance or maintain self esteem. For example, Attribution theory would postulate that such individuals have an external attribution for failure and an internal attribution for success. Thus, the individual would retain internal loci of coping strategies based on some past successes, and would write off failures as being the fault of, for example, the prison system, the unhelpfulness of social workers, bad luck etc. This was discussed in Chapter Four. A cognitive explanation of why an individual may

maintain an internal mode of coping strategy when it demonstrably does not work, would suggest that the individuals behaviour is based upon a fault in their reasoning. For example, as discussed in Chapter Three, Theorists such as Janis and Mann would maintain that an individual in conflict may adopt one of several decision making styles which are more or less appropriate, and which will have an influence upon the outcome. A number of these decision making styles, particularly 'unconflicted adherence', 'defensive avoidance' and 'hypervigilance' which were discussed in Chapter Three would account for why an individual did not change unsuccessful behaviour in this context. This explanation may be more feasible than the one based upon attribution theory, considering as it does the role of anxiety stress and conflict. The two explanations, however are based upon attentional deficit on the part of the individual making the decision, and there are probably no good grounds for accepting one to the exclusion of the other.

It may be therefore, that an individual attempts to use her own internal resources in order to cope with the problems engendered by her spouse's imprisonment. Many of these problems may be insoluble by the individual herself and failure may increase her anxiety about the

situation. She may continue to adopt this course of action either because she does not examine the range of possibilities open to her and thus sees her choices as being limited, or realising some urgent action is necessary chooses a course of action she habitually uses and 'hopes for the best'. If this is the case, then it might follow that, despite any effect of increased predictability, those respondents whose spouse has a long history of episodes of imprisonment would be no less anxious than those respondents whose spouse was in prison for the first time. This proposition appears to be supported in the present study. Despite a number of authors postulating a strong relationship between predictability and perceived control, there was no relationship found between number of previous episodes of spouse imprisonment and degree of perceived control.

#### 11.4.2 Social Support And Control

It is interesting to note that The present study highlighted a tendency for low anxiety / high control respondents to be more likely to have productive social relationships than high anxiety / low control respondents. The former were less likely to perceive their relationships with their family and with their spouse as having deteriorated. They were more likely



to see the visits in a positive light than were the latter. It can be seen then, that low anxiety / high control respondents are potentially more likely to be able to use social networks to gain support than are high anxiety / low control respondents. There is a body of evidence which would suggest that the constructive use of social supports is of predictive of adaptation to crises of dismemberment (See Chapter Two for discussion.)

#### 11.4.3 The Type Of Control Used By Respondents

The literature discussed in Chapter Five would suggest that for many women in the position of having a spouse imprisoned there is little possibility of attaining 'actual' control over many aspects of the experience. The bureaucracy which keeps her and her spouse apart is often virtually impenetrable, and she is given little information concerning the situation. She will, in many cases, be forced to deal with other agencies such as DSS and the Social Work Department where she may have to abdicate some autonomy in order to receive the help she may need. In actuality, she can do little or nothing to determine when the spouse will be returned to the home, although she may be aware that in the area of parole, much will depend upon how she, and her relationship with the spouse are perceived by the

authorities. The ways in which she is allowed to communicate with the spouse leave her with few means by which she can prevent any deterioration in the relationship. Indeed, this would seem to be recognised by the respondents in the present study. It is certainly the case that in the initial stages of the sentence the majority of women perceive themselves to have little or no control over events, and this was highlighted in the interview situation where most of the women sought information about the spouse's imprisonment from the interviewer. Most commonly, the information requested, was about the number of visits allowed, the length of time the spouse would serve, and the parole system. It was common for the respondent to be under the impression that her spouse would be automatically released after one third of his sentence., and a common complaint among the women was that 'there is nobody at the prison who can tell you what is happening.' A further complaint was that immediately after the spouse was sentenced, he was taken away without any information being given to the female partner. Commonly it was only after two or three days that the woman received a letter from the spouse, telling her where he was and enclosing a visiting pass.

Thompson defines information as a form of control, in that it makes the event predictable, allowing the individual to form an expectation about the course of an event or the consequences of implementing or failing to implement a particular course of action. As discussed above, it appears from previous literature and from the present study that information is often not available to women whose spouse has been imprisoned. Thus, it would appear that a major form of control is unavailable to the respondent. If predictability through information is seen as a form of control, then it would seem possible that those respondents whose spouse had a history of imprisonment would find the situation more predictable than naive respondents and would feel more in control. As discussed earlier in this chapter, this was not the case. In spite of the fact that women may know what to expect after the spouse's imprisonment, it seems from this study that such knowledge and predictability does not allow the woman to feel more in control.

#### 11.4.4 Use Of Different Domains Of Control

From the discussion so far, it would seem that for many women information regarding their spouse's imprisonment is not readily available, and there are aspects of the situation which in all probability are objectively

uncontrollable at a personal level. There is evidence to suggest that individuals who expect to fail are less likely to expend as much effort in the pursuance of a task than those individuals who expect to succeed and this would seem to be the case in the present study. It did seem that individuals who perceived themselves to have little control in a number of problem areas, were less likely to attempt to find out the rules regarding visiting and letter writing, were less likely to complain about any perceived deficits in treatment within the prison, and were less likely to feel that they could influence parole decisions. A typical comment by one woman who reported to the interviewer that prison staff had been offensive was, ' There's no point in complaining. They wouldn't do anything and they'd just take their spite out on F.' In relation to applying for benefits, it was extremely common for respondents to report that, 'I just take what they give me.', or that they did not know how much they were entitled to. In one particular case, the wife of a long term prisoner expressed dismay to the interviewer, reporting that she had been told by the DSS that she would have to divorce her husband before she was entitled to an increased benefit for being a single parent. It might be asked whether for respondents in

these circumstances any attempt to attain personal control of the situation is a feasible option.

This would seem to introduce the concept of domains of control into the analysis. As discussed in Chapter Four Paulhus and Christie (1981) distinguished between personal control, interpersonal control, and sociopolitical control. While from the preceding discussion, it appears that a large proportion of the respondents felt that they were unable to exercise personal control, or indeed attempted to exercise it with subsequent increases in anxiety, the use of interpersonal control and perhaps sociopolitical control might be of direct benefit to them. Findings from the present study would suggest that while a proportion of the respondents were using interpersonal control by making use of family and, less often, friends, it appears that those who were using family and friends as supports, were also those who were less anxious and were not the same people who who attempted to attain personal control by attempting to use their own internal resources to cope with the situation. Those who appeared to be using interpersonal control were also more likely to perceive themselves as being in control. It is perhaps unfortunate, however, that few if any of the respondents attempted to use what

Paulhus and Christie termed sociopolitical control. In the context of coping with spouse imprisonment, this strategy might be seen as being analogous to voluntarily abdicating control to a more powerful person or group, for example social work departments, citizen's advice bureaux, voluntary organisations etc. Results in this study, however indicate that respondents in the main did not make use of these facilities, and suggest that any relinquishing of control (for example in dealings with the prison and the DSS), was not voluntary.

#### 11.5 SUMMARY: THE ROLE OF CONTROL IN COPING WITH SPOUSE IMPRISONMENT.

The unpredictability of the situation which respondents found themselves in, and the fact that they were unable to obtain information needed in order to cope, may mean that personal control is objectively impossible to obtain. In these circumstances, it might be posited that because the partners of recidivists would be likely to perceive the circumstances of spouse imprisonment as being more predictable, and would be more likely to have a repertoire of strategies available from past experience, they would be more likely to perceive the situation as being controllable.

It could equally be argued that in the absence of objective control, these respondents may have been unable to attain control in the past, and thus generalising these failures would experience a lack of belief in response - outcome contingency, and also negative efficacy expectations. In this circumstance these expectations might influence them to expend less effort upon trying to control the situation.

The findings in the present study would tend to support the latter proposition. The findings would also seem to indicate that those respondents who attempted to use resources from domains other than the personal, were less anxious and felt more in control. The respondents generally did not use what Paulhus and Christie termed the sociopolitical domain.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

#### 12.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, it is intended to discuss the limitations of the present study and the implications of these limitations for extrapolation to the wider population of women who find themselves in the situation of having an imprisoned spouse. In the light of this discussion, the implications of the findings will be considered in relation to policy issues and personal interventions with individual women facing spouse imprisonment.

#### 12.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

##### 12.2.1 METHODOLOGICAL FACTORS

It might be argued that the essence of achieving the optimum in any scientific enquiry lies in achieving the best balance between the maximum reduction of systematic error in the enquiry, and the practicality of the mode of enquiry. While it may be that the most valid and reliable results will be obtained by use of a particular method,



if it is impossible to achieve these results as a consequence of constraints on, for example, time and resources which are required for the implementation of that method, then that method will be of less utility than one which perhaps had to be a compromise. The present study was designed with a view to eliminating or controlling for as much error as possible. In spite of this, there are a number of factors in the design which, in retrospect, may have the potential for introducing error. These factors would seem to lie primarily in the sampling procedure.

#### 12.2.1.1 Limitations In The Sample

As discussed in Chapter Six, the sampling model adopted in this study used a stratification procedure which was intended to produce nine cells each containing twenty respondents. As a result attrition due mainly to refusal of permission by men for the researcher to approach their spouse and refusals of female partners to take part in the study, the number of respondents in the final sample was 123, and there were a number of unequal cell frequencies. This was particularly apparent in the end of sentence cells where the two difficulties outlined above were compounded by the fact that the lead time from the researcher approaching the women in those cells to actually conducting the interview meant that in a number

of cases, the male partner had been released and was living at home. Thus the interview could not take place.

While the potential for the introduction of error is recognised, it should be noted that the situation arose to a large extent as a result of the resolution within the research method that fully informed consent would be sought from both the prisoner and his spouse before an interview would take place. In the planning stages it was assumed that if a prisoner, after having been informed of the nature of the research and the proposed involvement of his spouse, still consented to take part in the study, then he would also give consent for his wife to be approached. In the event this did not happen in a number of cases, where the man upon being asked at the end of his interview to sign a letter giving his consent to an approach being made to his wife, refused. This had not been foreseen, and there did not seem to be any remedy for it, given the design of the study. It should also be noted that where applicable, the statistical procedures used in the analysis of the data were chosen for their utility in controlling for or allowing for unequal numbers in comparative groups.

A potentially more serious problem arose in the longitudinal study. Due to constraints on time and

resources, the longitudinal sub - sample was, initially, fairly small. By the end of the twelve month period, this sample had been reduced by 42% as a result of attrition. Since the failure to secure a follow - up interview was primarily a result of respondents being no longer contactable at their last known address, there was no possibility of establishing whether the drop - outs' circumstances had changed in any significant way since the previous interview. In retrospect, an additional source of difficulty with the results of the longitudinal study was the decision to select the respondents from one cell, while being unable to match all subjects more exactly for length of husband's absence. As discussed in Chapter Six, in order that the respondents in the longitudinal study would not have their partner released within the twelve month study period, the respondents were all recruited from the long term, beginning of sentence cell. However, as discussed in Chapter Ten, even this matching is a fairly gross one. In spite of excluding those respondents in cell seven whose spouse had been in prison for more than twelve months, there were within the subsample, respondents whose spouse had been in prison for a matter of weeks and also some respondents whose spouse had been in prison for months. Thus while there may be problems of generalisability to the whole sample because this small sample was selected

from one homogeneous cell in terms of length and stage of sentence, it may also be the case that there are problems relating to the fact that the respondents may not be completely matched for length of spouse's absence. The research lesson learned from these difficulties is that in any future endeavour, such a longitudinal study would ideally entail a larger sample embracing a wider range of sentence lengths and with subjects matched more exactly by length of spouse's absence

Having discussed the potential limitations of the present study, what implications does it have for policy and practice in relation to spouse imprisonment? This will be discussed in the remaining two sections of this chapter.

### 12.3 INTERVENTIONS WITH ANXIOUS INDIVIDUALS: A COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL APPROACH.

Perhaps the most significant findings in the present study are those relating to the role of anxiety in the perception of and responses to problems for the women in the sample. It would seem appropriate therefore, to consider ways in which interventions with the individual may alleviate this anxiety and assist her in coping with the objective problems engendered by spouse imprisonment.

A proposition arising out of this thesis, is that people view events in very different ways, and the way in which an individual appraises an event will depend on the attributions that they make. An individual who is both anxious and demoralised as seemed to be the case with a large proportion of the respondents in this study may see any failure to cope as being a reflection of his or her own competence, and this may affect the way in which he or she attempts to cope in the future. Results from the present study indicated that while anxiety was common, those respondents who expressed most anxiety were less likely to feel in control. They were more likely to perceive problems as being related to the spouse's imprisonment, even when there was evidence which equally suggested other reasons for the problem and were more likely to perceive their problems as being more extreme and longer lasting than those who expressed less anxiety.

Beck (1985), cited in Chapters One and Four, maintains that emotional problems can be caused or exacerbated by the individuals holding irrational beliefs about themselves and their world. He identified a number of logical flaws which pervade the thinking of anxious individuals'. These are as follows:

i) Overgeneralisation, where an individual takes one bad experience as evidence that there is something globally wrong.

ii) 'Catastrophisation' where an individual exaggerates the consequence of a difficulty out of proportion

iii) Hypervigilance, where the individual accepts one interpretation of an event in preference to others because it fits in with his or her perception of a situation.

Thus the anxious individual may encounter a situation which it is beyond her capabilities to deal with, fail to cope with that situation, attribute this failure to cope as a personal failing, and almost look for further evidence, (including the fact that she is anxious), of her own personal deficits, and so on. It would seem then, that a major task in intervening with such an anxious client would be to break this cycle of overgeneralisation, catastrophisation and hypervigilance by encouraging the client to recognise the logical flaws in her thinking.

In his account of cognitive therapy, Beck offers following three basic questions which can be used by the therapist to help the client restructure their thinking:

1) ' What is the evidence?' This question may be asked of the client in order to help her to client to analyse her own interpretation of the event and to recognise logical flaws in her conclusions.

2) ' What is another way of looking at the situation?' Beck maintains that most anxious clients have difficulty in creating alternative non - threatening interpretations of an event, and the therapist's role is to help the client in eliciting such alternatives.

3) 'What will be the result if what you fear does come to pass?' Beck maintains that anxious clients, in order to avoid further stress, typically terminate prematurely an examination of their fears coming true. By encouraging the client to think about the worst case scenario and other less drastic outcomes, as well as factors which might be present which would ameliorate the outcome, the therapist can help the client to reduce their anxiety about what was previously an unknown situation.

In effect what Beck advocates in his cognitive therapy is to encourage the client to exercise cognitive control. That is the use of various cognitive strategies to influence how she perceives a situation. The main feature of this cognitive therapy is that it is in effect

a form of skills training. The client is taught how to evaluate their own cognitions, thus allowing them to detach themselves from the situation and view it in a more objective manner.

An interesting 'cognitive behavioural' adjunct to this type of therapy, is one which was used with some success by a research team at the Alcohol Studies Centre, Paisley College (Allsopp, Carr and Saunders in press). This work which was based upon the work of D'Zurilla and Goldfried (1971), and others, and which was discussed in Chapter Four involved training anxious problem drinkers in generaliseable skills such as problem solving, goal setting and self monitoring in order for them to be able to anticipate high risk / high stress situations, to be able to detach themselves from the problem and to allow them to utilise vigilant decision making styles. It was postulated that as individuals observed themselves coping, initially in a protected situation and with support from the therapist, their perception of themselves as not being able to cope changes and the probability of being able to cope constructively in subsequent high stress situations increases. With each subsequent success and each subsequent decrease in the level of protection offered by the therapist, it was postulated that the clients confidence, vigilance, and



autonomy and perceived control would increase. This is in fact what occurred in the Paisley study over the period of six months after the intervention ceased.

The essence then, of cognitive behavioural interventions in the context of anxiety and subsequent impaired performance, is to break the cycle of anxiety leading to impaired performance which is internally attributed and increases anxiety. The method demands that the individual consciously acts to attain control of situations which were previously seen to be beyond the individual's control. It also demands, however, that the individual learn to distinguish situations which are objectively uncontrollable. Behaving in a successful manner, is postulated to be a much more potent piece of evidence for the individual's competence than purely verbal interventions with the same objective. An important aspect of the usefulness of these interventions is that they are applicable beyond the present problem and can be used in many aspects of the individual's life.

It is obvious that cognitive and cognitive behavioural interventions are only one means of addressing anxiety within individuals. They do seem to have empirical and clinical validity, and it is this, together with the fact that they demand few or no skills which social workers,

counsellors, psychologists and other helpers do not have or cannot readily learn, would seem to make them a useful addition to the repertoire of such professionals.

#### 12.4 IMPLICATIONS OF RESULTS FOR POLICY.

##### 12.4.1 Introduction: Problems Identified In The Present Study

In spite of the fact that much of the British literature relating to the problems of women whose spouse has been imprisoned is up to thirty years old, it would seem unfortunate that at the time the present study was being conducted, little had since changed to improve the lot of this group of women.

Within the criminal justice and penal systems, the sole focus seemed to be on the offender, his offence, and his punishment, with his family being seen as what Morris called an 'external appendage'. Thus from the moment the man was arrested, his family perceived themselves to be largely left to their own devices, and had to find out information about the man's situation without help. In the present study, it was reported that women only found out where the man actually was when they received a letter from him some days after he was sentenced. It

appears that the decision as to which prison the man is to be incarcerated in took no account of his home area, and his family therefore, were left with the added burden of having to travel what were often long distances in order to visit. The present study identified travelling as one of the major problems for women visiting their spouse. The visiting situation itself was almost invariably geared around the requirements of the prison system rather than around the needs of the prisoner and his family. Thus the women often had to travel at night or on Sundays to areas on public transport which was scarce and infrequent, only to find that the visiting conditions were not conducive to anything other than the most superficial of interactions. In terms of parole, the respondents again reported a severe paucity of information reaching them.

With regard to social work assistance, it was almost universally perceived among the respondents in the present study that social work involvement in the community was undesirable, or at least irrelevant. The comments from the woman regarding prison social work which are reproduced in Chapter Seven, seemed to indicate a perception that prison social workers either did not see the family as being within their field of responsibility or that the family was seen merely as a

means to the prisoner's settling back into society after the sentence was served. Voluntary organisations in the community appeared to be seen in terms of the services known to be provided by them. This was primarily the transport provided by the Scottish Association For Care And Resettlement Of Offenders, to outlying prisons.

#### 12.4.2 Recent Changes In Penal Policy

Since the fieldwork for this study was carried out, there have been a number of positive changes in the Scottish prison system. The censorship of letters has been relaxed in a number of prisons. Telephones have been introduced and are now a standard method of contact between the prisoner and people outside the prison. Restrictions on prisoners corresponding with the media have been relaxed, and visiting facilities in most prisons have been dramatically improved. Indeed, visitors centres have been introduced, in conjunction with voluntary organisations at a number of prisons. These provide facilities for visitors to change and nurse children, obtain refreshments, etc.

Perhaps the most dramatic change in the prison system, however, is the change in management ethos which has evolved since the mid - eighties. This is symbolised by the introduction of a mission statement which is more or

less prominently displayed in public areas within Scottish prisons. This statement makes explicit that the prison service is a 'service' industry and that the prisoners are the clients. The mission statement also embraces the concept of greater openness and accountability in the running of the prisons both at central and local level. In addition, the new management ethos dictates that the service will be subject to internal evaluation within the context of a set of performance indicators. Thus, in theory at least, this change in management ethos and the relaxation of contacts between prisoners and the outside world, leaves the way open for the removal of or reduction in the problems faced by prisoners' families in dealing with the prison system and maintaining contact with the prisoner. It is not a panacea, however. The dominant ethos, centrally and locally, would seem to be dictated by the need for security, and this is probably going to be an unchanging feature for the foreseeable future. Within the constraints of security in prisons, it would seem that a number of measures could be implemented which would not be outwith the spirit of the prevailing ethos.

#### 12.4.3 Implications Of The Results Of This Study For Penal Policy

1) In order to counteract the severe paucity of information available to families after the man has been sentenced, it would be useful for the prison to which the man has been committed to send routinely to his family an information pack containing details of the prison system in general, the particular prison holding the man, details of where the prison is, public transport, visits, other means of contacting the man, the rights of the individual as a prisoner and as a visitor, etc. Details of sources of help and advice within the prison service and also in the community could also be included, as well as brief details of the type of regime the man was being held under, what would happen to him in the near future, etc. An extension of this would involve greater coordination between the prison authorities, prison social work, and community based social work in order to work jointly to lessen the trauma for the family and the prisoner.

2) The management guidelines issued by the Scottish office dictate that long term prisoners be involved in a 'sentence planning' exercise. It would seem to be desirable to involve the family as well as the prisoner in any decision making procedures. This would have the effect of providing further information to the families, helping to maintain contact between the prisoner and his

family, and allowing the prisoner and his family to retain some control over the situation. The degree of perceived loss of control identified in the present study was striking.

3) Visits within the prison could be relaxed and improved. The concept of 'family visits', where the prisoner and his family are allowed to meet unsupervised within closed accommodation has been implemented in a number of penal settings (Australia for example). Indeed this type of visit should not be seen to be in any way revolutionary, or even new. It has been the norm for certain small minorities of the Scottish prison population for a number of years. Unsupervised visits were introduced to Penninghame open prison in the Sixties, and when the Barlinnie special unit for disruptive prisoners was established in the mid - Seventies, unsupervised visits were introduced.

4) The imprisonment of a spouse would seem invariably to cause financial difficulties for the family. This has been a recurrent theme since Goodblood's study in 1928. This does not only cause financial hardship, but also causes problems of anxiety relating to role shifts, dealing with the bureaucracy of the 'benefits agency' etc. It would appear that the recommendations made by

Goodblood and implemented by the state of Kentucky in the early years of this century may still hold good today. With the increasing emphasis upon prison industry embarking upon commercially viable ventures, (for example, prison joinery workshops accepting contracts to make flat pack furniture for major retailers), It would seem to be desirable to increase the remuneration for prison work to at least the current level of benefit available to job trainees in the community. This money could be automatically credited to the prisoner's spouse as a substitute for benefit, relieving her of the need to claim benefit for herself and her children. This might, incidentally, help to reduce estrangement between the man and his spouse, while again allowing the family to retain some control over the situation. It would also be consistent with the current government ethos of making absent fathers accountable for the financial welfare of their children.

In order to implement any such initiatives as those outlined above, it would seem that a fundamental need is for a much greater degree of coordination cooperation and role sharing, locally and centrally, between the array of bodies with official responsibility for prisoners and their families. Indeed, Lord Morton of Shuna in advocating a Ministry of Justice stated that 'we talk



about a criminal justice system, but there is a total lack of any system at all' He cited the fact that social work was run by local authorities, prosecutions by the procurators fiscal service and the crown office, courts by the Scottish courts administration, and the prison service by the SHHD.....'This is an arrangement which enables a central bureaucracy to operate on the principle of divide and rule' (Glasgow Herald, Nov 11 1991).

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WIVES' QUESTIONNAIRE

CODE

Case No

Date

Name

Address

Prison

Sentence length/  
and offence

Proportion of  
sentence completed

No. of children

Age of children

Sex of children

SECTION A : BIOGRAPHICAL

. How long married/cohabiting?

. How long has husband been in prison?

SECTION B : MATERIAL

Does wife feel that standard of living has changed  
since husband's imprisonment?

(If yes) In what way?  
(Prompt: eg. better, worse; examples)

How much did husband contribute to family budget  
before his arrest?  
(as proportion of budget)

Did wife work up until husband's imprisonment?

Does she work now?

(If yes to Q.5)  
For how long have you worked?

. (If started work after husband's imprisonment)  
Why did you take the job on?

(a) money

(b) other reasons (specify)

Other sources of income?  
(eg. Social Work, DHSS)

(If applicable)  
Other strategies to maintain standard of living?  
(eg. selling articles, borrowing, savings, credit)

. Does wife feel anxious about finances?

. (If yes)  
To what extent?  
(a little, quite a bit, a lot)

How much control do you feel you have over your finances?  
(eg. do you find it hard to budget?)

Have you moved house since your husband's arrest?

- (a) yes, before he was imprisoned
- (b) yes, after he was imprisoned
- (c) no

What was the reason for moving?

- (a) emotional  
(e.g. feelings of stigma, house held  
unhappy associations etc.)
- (b) material  
(e.g. could not afford expense of house,  
mortgage foreclosure etc.)
- (c) other reasons (specify)



How do you feel about your present house by comparison with your previous one?

Debts left by husband or incurred while husband was at home?

Debts incurred since husband's imprisonment?

SECTION C : CHILDREN

Number and age of children?

Do children know where father is?

Does wife think children have been affected by  
father's imprisonment?

Has wife noticed any change in children's behaviour since  
father's imprisonment?  
(e.g. discipline, emotional change, relationships within  
family, changes in attitude towards mother)

Have there been reports of behaviour change from outside  
home?  
(e.g. school)

Do children speak about their father?

In what way?  
(e.g. resentfully, miss him etc.)

Have children said anything to indicate that they have heard others outside home speak about their father?  
(e.g. school, neighbours, friends etc.)

Are children taken to see their father?

(a) every visit

(b) sometimes (e.g. every second/third visit)

(c) infrequently

(d) only once but not subsequently

(e) never

. (If seldom, once, or never)  
Why not?


(If yes):  
What is their reaction at visits?

children's health

2. Have children any health problems?

• (If yes)

What are they and when did they appear?



• Has wife any specific anxieties about the effect on the children of father's absence?

SECTION D : FAMILY/FRIENDS/OTHERS IN COMMUNITY

FAMILY

How does wife get on with her family of origin?

Has their relationship changed as a result of husband's imprisonment?

(If yes)  
In what way?

Has she/could she receive emotional/material help from them?

How does wife get on with in-laws?

Has this relationship changed as a result of husband's imprisonment?

(If yes)  
In what way?

Has she/could she receive emotional/material support from them?

Would you say that you have a large circle of fairly close friends or are you the kind of person who tends to prefer to confine friends to a smaller circle?

Does a small circle mean only one or two friends, or more?

- Effect of husband's imprisonment on patterns of friendship?  
(e.g. have you lost friends, have you made different friends, do you do things now you didn't do before)

πσ

If the need arose do you think you would go to friends for help?

(b) material yes  
no

---

NEIGHBOURS

5. How friendly is she with her neighbours?

6. How do neighbours react to her?

7. Any feelings of stigma?

8. Neighbours as source of help?

SOCIAL LIFE

9. Has social life changed any?

(If yes)

In what way?

(e.g. do you go out more or less, do you go out with different people, do you go to different places etc.)

Would you say that any change in social life is due to

- (a) financial
- (b) other considerations

(If (b))

What other considerations?

(If applicable)

Do you ever feel lonely as a result of your husband's absence?

- (a) all the time
- (b) a lot
- (c) sometimes
- (d) occasionally
- (e) never, although pattern of life has remained the same
- (f) no - social life has expanded

(If yes)

How do you cope with loneliness?



---

SECTION E : RELATIONSHIP WITH HUSBANDMore imprisonment

Would you say you and your husband were close?

- |                                                       |                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| (a) Did you go out together                           | a lot            |
|                                                       | seldom           |
|                                                       | never            |
| (b) Did you have any periods of separation?           | yes              |
|                                                       | no               |
| (c) Did you discuss problems?                         | yes              |
|                                                       | no               |
| (d) Did you have interests in common?                 | yes              |
|                                                       | no               |
| (e) Was there a lot of affection in the relationship? | yes              |
|                                                       | no               |
| (f) Were you happy with one another?                  | always           |
|                                                       | most of the time |
|                                                       | seldom           |
|                                                       | never            |

ring imprisonment

Has husband's imprisonment changed the wife's relationship  
with husband in any way?

(If yes)  
In what way?

Why?

Does she think the sentence has changed the husband's  
attitude towards her?

(If yes)  
In what way?

ITS

How often does wife visit husband?

Has she had any extra visits?  
(e.g. arranged by Social Work Unit)

(If yes)  
Why?

Opinions about facilities

(a) child care

(b) privacy —

(c) transport arrangements (if any)

(d) attitudes of prison staff

(e) physical context of visit  
(e.g. "open" across a table, or "closed" behind  
glass etc.)

- . Have there been any occasions when you have been caused distress or had problems due to the arrangements regarding visits to prison?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- . How strict are staff in enforcing rules?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- . On the other hand, are there any aspects of prison visits which you find particularly helpful?

Do you discuss problems at visits?

(If yes)

What kind of problems?

- 
- . (a) Do you find certain things more difficult to discuss than others?
  
  - (b) Do you find that there are things you cannot discuss or even mention at visits?
  
  - . (a) How useful or important are visits in helping to sustain the relationship?
  
  - (b) Do you think it would help in any way if visits could be longer or more frequent?
  
  - . How does husband act at visits?
  
  
  - . Any other problems with visits?
    - (a) cost of travel
  
    - (b) emotional upsets
  
    - (c) disruption of household routine
  
    - (d) other (specify)

LETTERS

(a) How often does wife write to husband?

(b) How often does husband write to wife?

How useful or important are letters in sustaining your relationship?

What kinds of things do you use letters for?  
(e.g. mainly to keep in touch, let husband know you care,  
discuss or share problems, pass on news etc.)

Does knowledge that mail is censored affect what is written?  
(e.g. do they feel inhibited)

PLEASE

When is your husband due for release?

(If applicable)

Have you had the experience of your husband being refused parole?

(If yes)

What were your feelings about it?

Did your husband try to spare your feelings by hiding anything?

(If applicable)

When is your husband due his first/next parole review?

(If applicable)

How do you feel about it?

(e.g. pessimistic, hopeful, depending on it etc.)

Hopes/expectations about husband's release?  
(e.g. how do you think it will be, can you see any  
problems etc.)

Do you feel that the relationship will be the same as  
before?

(If no)  
How will they be changed?

(If yes)  
Is she happy with that?

In general, do you expect things to be better or worse?





Have you ever gone to anyone for professional help or advice about emotional/anxiety problems since your husband's arrest? (e.g. doctor)

Do you think that this anxiety has been caused by your husband's arrest/imprisonment?

How do you think your husband sees the future of the relationship while he is in prison?

Does she know if he ever sought help in prison concerning anxieties about the relationship?

TH

Does she suffer from any health problems?  
(Attempt to determine as accurately as possible the time of onset of these problems)

Is she taking any medication?  
(e.g. anti-depressants, other tranquillizers, sleeping pills, any anti-allergy pills for skin rashes etc.)  
(Attempt to determine accurately the periods when she started to need this medication)

Does wife see any health problems as being related to husband's imprisonment?

---

SECTION F : AGENCIES

SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENTS

SER? Did husband receive SER?

(If yes)

What did social worker ask about?

Did social worker keep in contact after husband was imprisoned?

Did social worker refer wife or children to anyone else?

What sort of help (if any) was given?

TER HUSBAND CONVICTED

Did an social worker contact the family after husband's imprisonment?

What was this about?

How did you feel about receiving this kind of contaot?

Did they explain how you came to their attention?

Have you ever gone to a social worker of your own accord since your husband's imprisonment?

What was this about?

(If yes)

Were they able to help?

(a) when social worker approached you

(b) when you approached social worker

In what way were they able to help?

Were you given any information or advice about other agencies?

Has this contact continued?

ER

Had family ever been subject to social work intervention before?

(If yes)  
What for?

Had children been known to social worker for any reason before?

Why?

Was your child still seeing a social worker at the time of your husband's trial and imprisonment?

(If not)

Did a social worker start seeing your child again after your husband went to prison?

(If yes to Q.21)

Was it you or the social worker who initiated this contact?

Is there anything in particular you feel that social workers could do to help women in your position?

Any contact with Social Work Unit within the prison?

Who initiated this contact?

(a) self

(b) other (specify)

(c) Social Work Unit

What was it about?

ER/VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

Does wife know of any agencies other than social work  
where she could receive help?  
(specify)

(If yes) How did you find out about them?

Has she had help from any of them?

(If yes)  
Who initiated contact?

What sort of help was available?

(If yes to Q.28)  
How did you feel about getting this type of help?

(If no to Q.28)  
If you knew of any agency would you have accepted help  
from them if they had approached you?

Would you have gone to them for help if necessary?

IS ALL I WANT TO ASK. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO MENTION?



Mr A Carr  
Department of Social Administration  
University of Edinburgh  
24 Buccleuch Place  
EDINBURGH EH8 9LN



The Address only to be written on this side

## POST CARD

DATE OF APPOINTMENT Wed 26/3/86 11<sup>15</sup>

PREFERRED TIME OF APPOINTMENT

Morning .....

Afternoon .....

Evening .....

(If the above date is unsuitable, please insert  
an alternative date below)

No appointment please

(signed) Everett (Weale)

I will call you  
on 26/3